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Boomerang Studio: Community Design for Action

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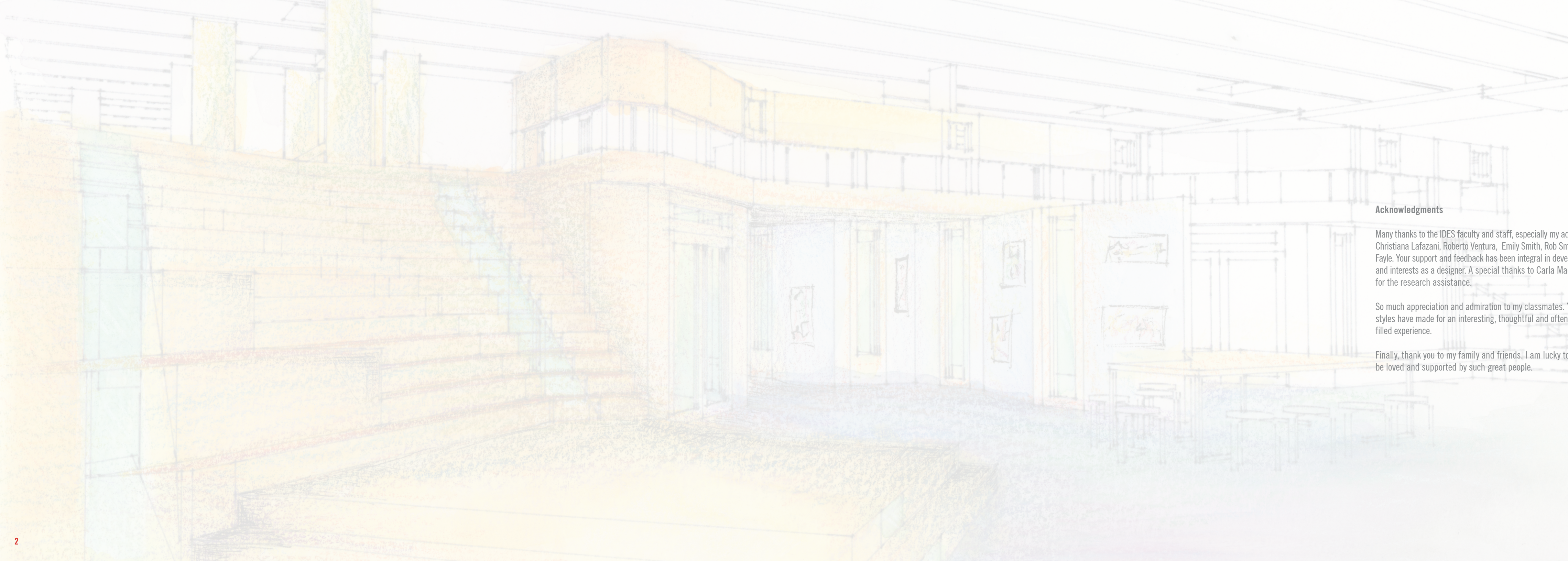
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a thesis
proposal by

jessie walton

boomerang community design for action

studio



Acknowledgments

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manifesto

Design should excite, motivate, develop, engage and inspire.

Design is layered. It has no end. It touches every aspect of life and in this way, design changes our concept of time. Design increases productivity or asks to savor the moment.

Design is a call to action. To beautify, to conceptualize, to educate, to re-imagine the past or create for the future.

To craft an experience using hand, body and mind. To engage the senses.

Design constantly moves forward while building off the past. Ultimately, design benefits the user. A designer must show an understanding of the user's connection to the space within the design.

A designer's character is reflected in their design. Therefore, one must pursue design with honest intention.

Design has the ability to spark discussion.

To engage others in questions of how. To create an environment that calms, supports, or energizes.

Design has the ability to give a voice to those who are underrepresented. In this way, design empowers.



“My goal is to make furniture that people can be comfortable living with. If you're not preoccupied with making an impact with your designs, chances are something that looks good today will look good tomorrow.”

Sam Maloof

sam maloof | side chair



abstract

Motivation

A study published by the Southern Education Foundation in January 2015 found 39 percent of Virginia public school students in 2013 came from low income families. A policy brief from The Working Poor Families Project states that, of the 24 million children from low income families across the country, over half are of racial or ethnic minorities. Additionally, research compiled by the Americans for the Arts found that these underserved communities are provided less access to arts education. In 2008, the percentage of African American and Hispanic students who had received any level of arts education was 26.2 and 28.2 percent, respectively. Comparatively, white students received arts instruction at more than double the rate, 57.9 percent.

Problem

Arts education has been shown to help at-risk communities develop more engaged students (Creedon, 2011). Through in-school or community-based programs, urban youth in low income communities are taught to be more aware of their social, political and community impact when they engage with the arts (Lin, 2013). Arts programs serve as important stepping stones for exploring careers in design, which typically lack diversity.

However, students of color enroll in art and design school in lower numbers than their white peers, while they enroll in high numbers across other disciplines. The 2014-2015 Common Data Set from the Pratt Institute reveals 18 students of color and 229 white first-time first year students. Lack of diversity is also reflected in faculty. Rhode Island School of Design's 2014 Fact Book lists 129 white faculty and 4 black and Hispanic faculty.

Design should address multiple experiences, yet it draws primarily from the dominant culture. Much like arts education, design thinking teaches key skills that transfer to a variety of situations beyond design. These skills, such as critical thinking, problem solving, interpersonal relationships, risk-taking and the ability to communicate with peers and laymen, are critical to navigating the adult world. Programs that aim to teach design thinking to low income communities of color might provide students skills that will benefit them in many careers and aid them in complex problem solving. Additionally, these programs would expose underserved communities to design opportunities, potentially answering the need for greater diversity in design.

Methods

Numerous case studies and literature reviews make an argument supporting the belief that students benefit in many ways from arts education and design thinking. Reviewing statistics on the availability of arts programs in public schools further proves the importance of these programs. Interviews and peer reviewed writings address the importance of diversity within design and the means of achieving greater representation for marginalized designers.

Results

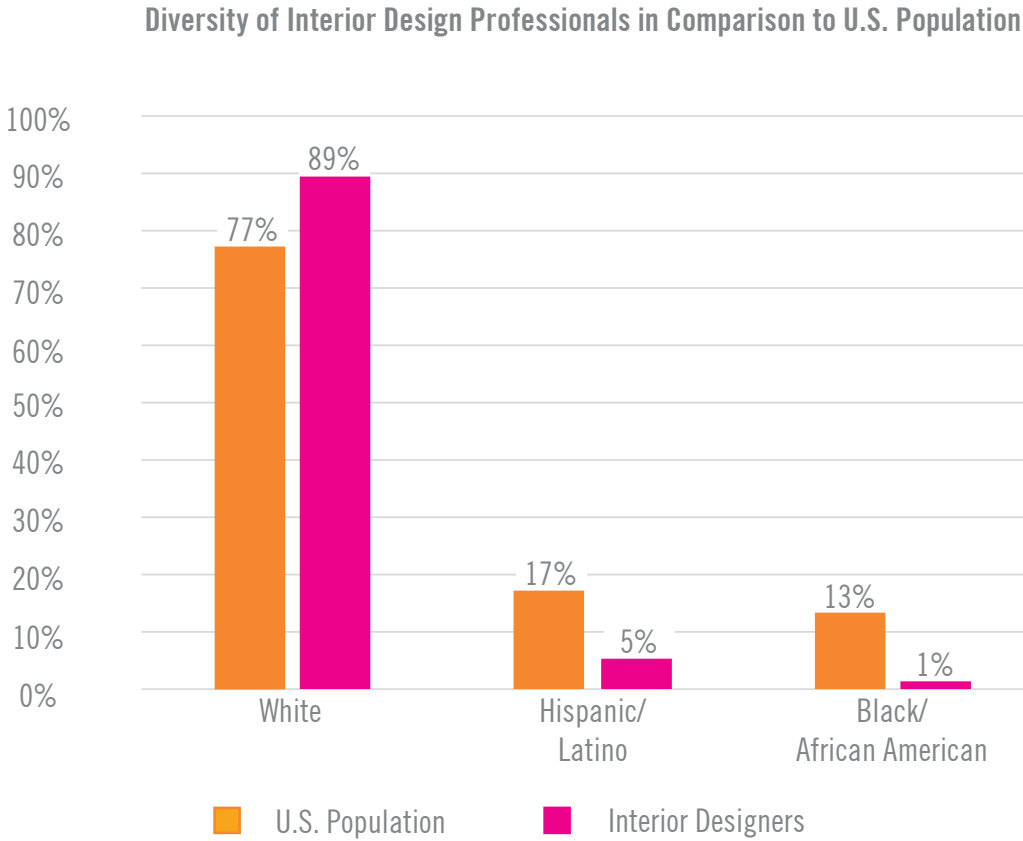
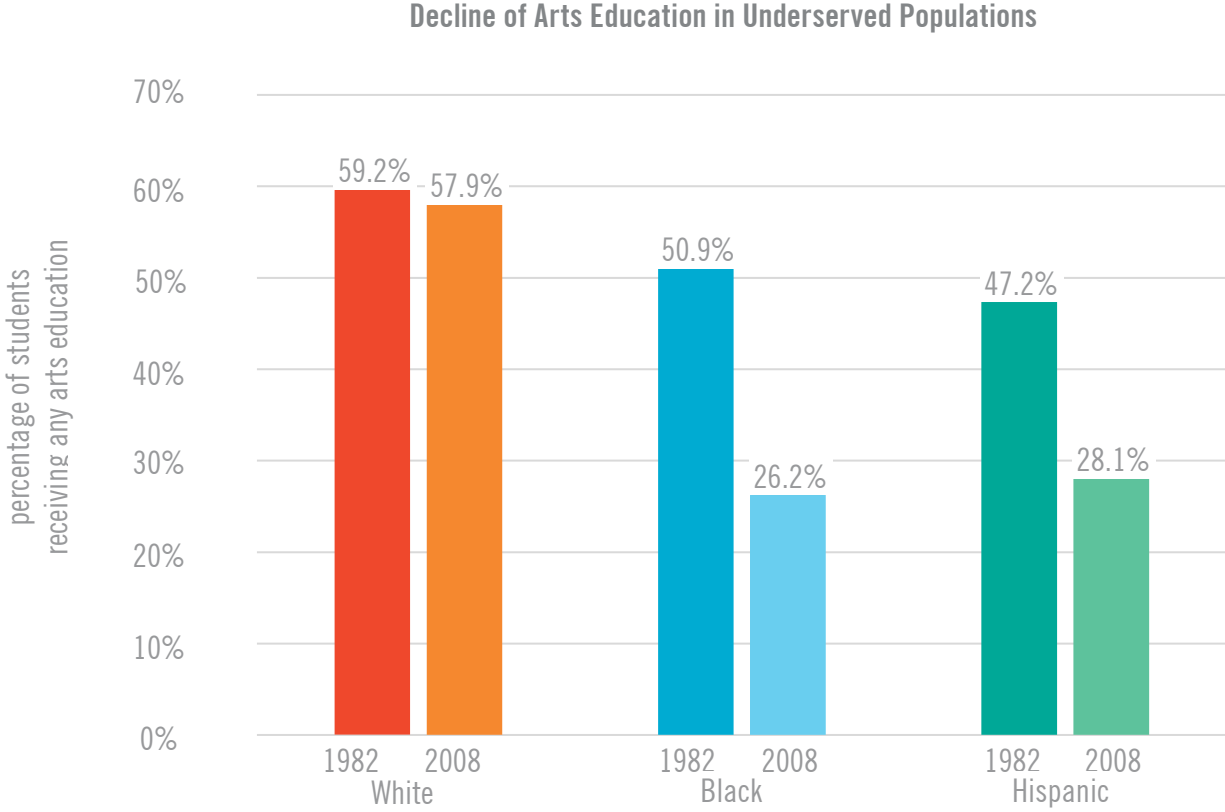
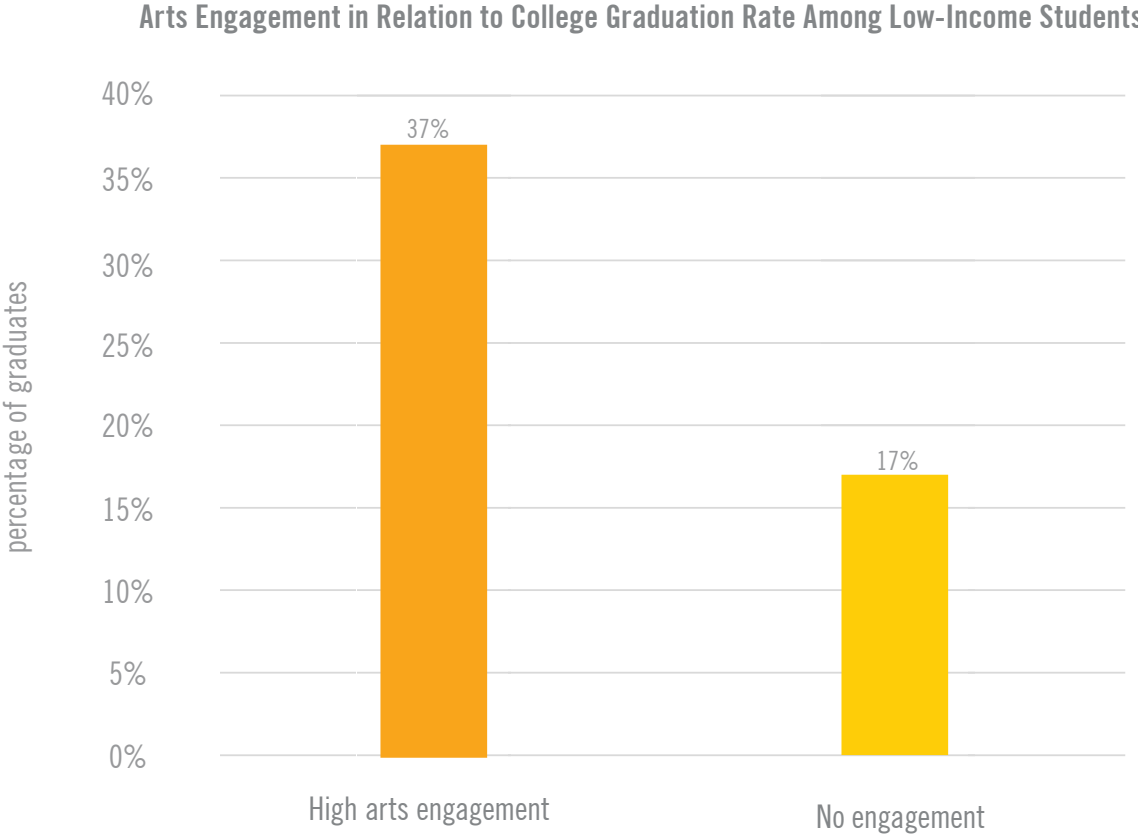
"African-Americans are approximately 13.5% of the nation's population...The number of black registered architects who are members of the American Institute of Architects currently is barely 1%" (Travis, 2010).

Architects, designers and educators such as Jack Travis explain that within design there is a lack of representation which creates tension between white peers who struggle to engage in conversations of inclusion. There are very few initiatives within the design community to engage in this topic or encourage different voices to join the profession.

The implementation of design education and thinking gives students critical skills for navigating complex problems, managing stress and anxiety as well as developing interpersonal skills. Students with these skills are more engaged in the learning process (Razzouk & Shute, 2012).

Conclusions

Students who develop design thinking skills become more engaged in the education and creative processes. They have more positive conflict management and communication skills, which influence their interactions in other situations outside these programs.





case studies

Studio H

Studio H is a public school studio class modeled after a design-build style of design discovery. The program creates real world projects for middle + high school students in communities that lack interactive, design thinking based curriculum. Through the Studio H class, students learn the design process via projects they've imagined and followed through to creation.

Program founder, Emily Pillonton breaks down the curriculum into six design directives:

Design through action

Design with, not for

Design systems, not stuff

Document, share, measure

Start locally + scale globally

Build

And approaches the integration of education and design as a means of fostering community by addressing the overlap in thee main ways:

Design for Education. Addressing the spaces, materials and experience within an occupied area.

Redesigning Education. Looking at how education is administered, what is

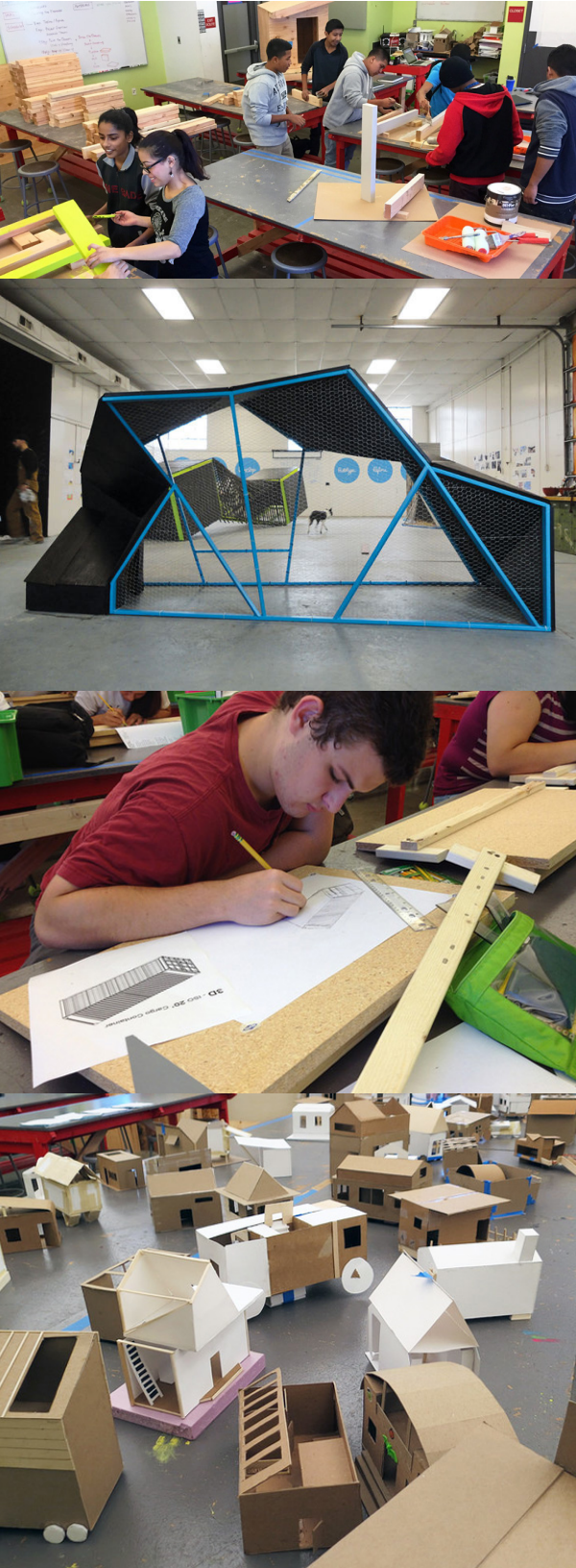
offered and to whom. In other words, providing opportunity for change and the motivation for those involved to want change.

Design as Education. Teaching and learning, "design thinking, coupled with real construction and fabrication skills put towards a local community purpose." As well as, melding the critical studio environment with a shop based class to apply core class skills.

How does Studio H inform the program for spark?

Studio H addresses many of themes within spark's program. It focuses on the same demographics- middle + high school aged students, with particular attention to girls and students of color, showing them the ways they can use their core subjects to generate an interest in the exploration of spaces and how things are made, while emphasizing the local community for which the students are designing. Studio H pushes students to think creatively + encourages self-expression through these community based projects. The Studio H curriculum celebrates independent critical thinking, experimentation and helps to foster confidence through a sense of accomplishment + new understanding.

Students learn critical thinking, collaboration and verbal communication skills which are vital in the working world. Studio H's year long curriculum teaches students the value of hard-work, hands-on learning and craftsmanship.

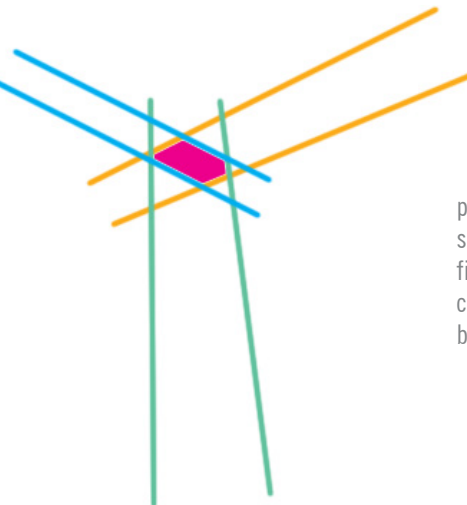
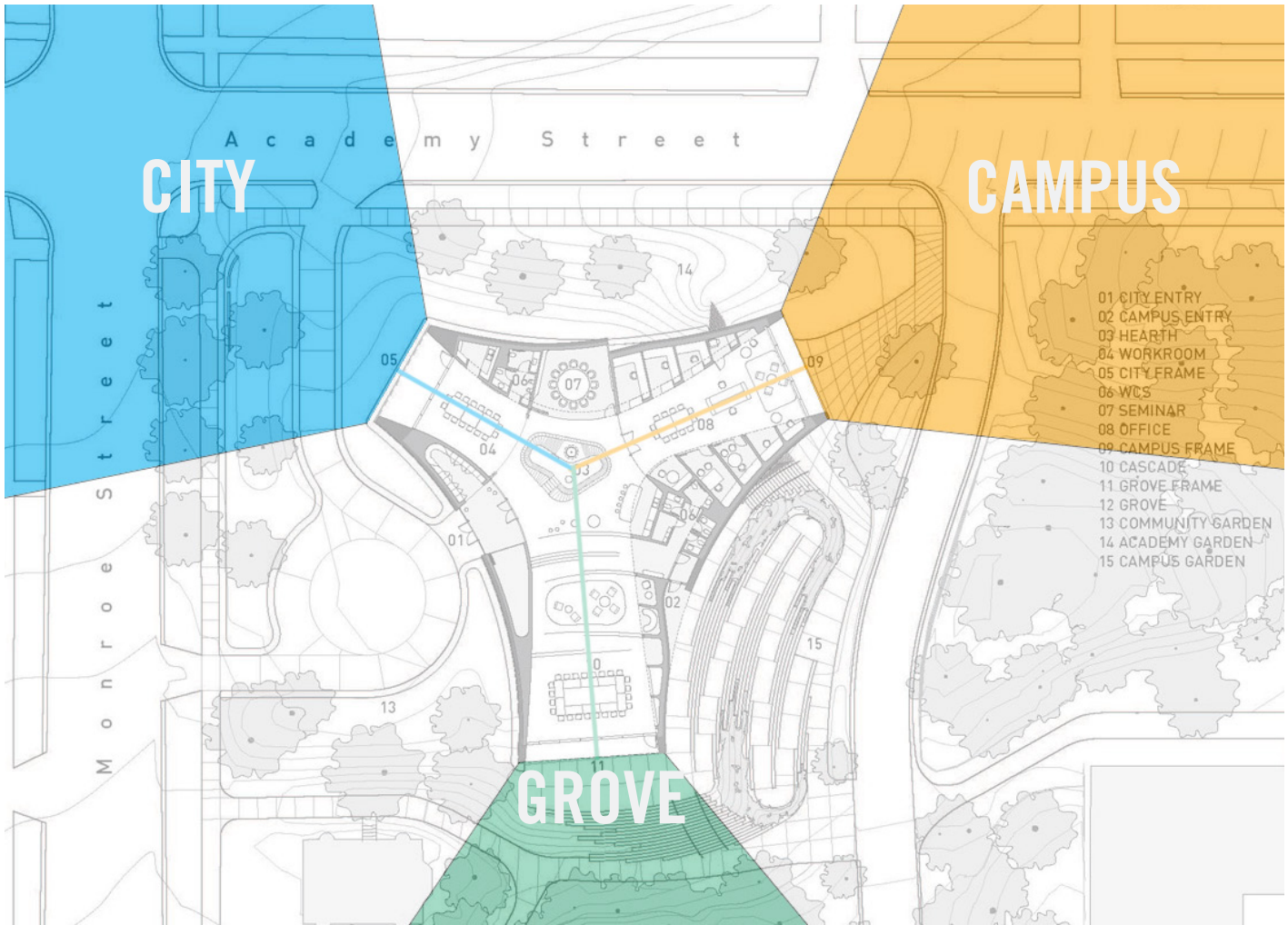
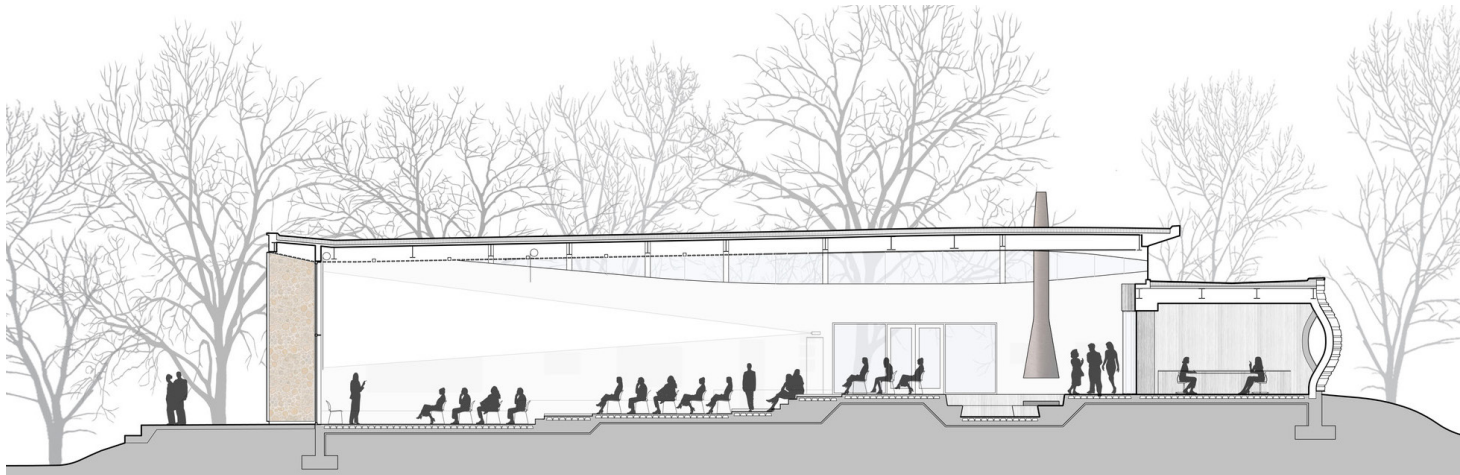


The Arcus Center for Social Justice Leadership



Studio Gang Architects
Completed 2014
Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo, Michigan

This building was designed with diversity in mind. It is meant to engage the community in conversations about social justice. It does so by creating an interior space that is open and communal. At the center of the building a sunken area with a fireplace creates an inviting place for conversation. Furthermore, it creates a direct connection between the dialogue happening within the building to the communities outside the building. Each arm of the building overlooks landscape particular to the college community. City, grove and campus are visually connected to the heart of the building through these sight lines and place all 3 as equally important.



pathways lead to center of space. sunken area with fireplace creates area for conversation at heart of building.



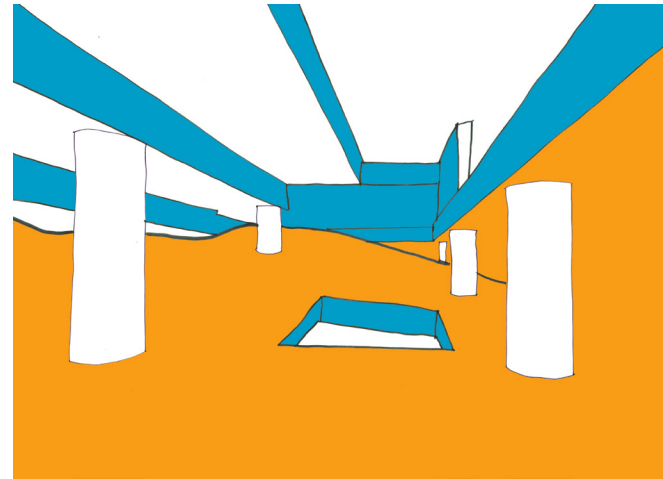
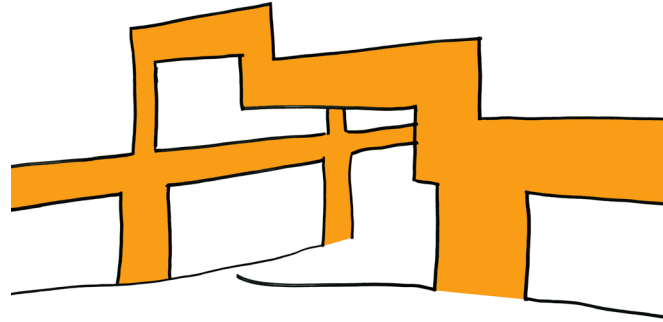
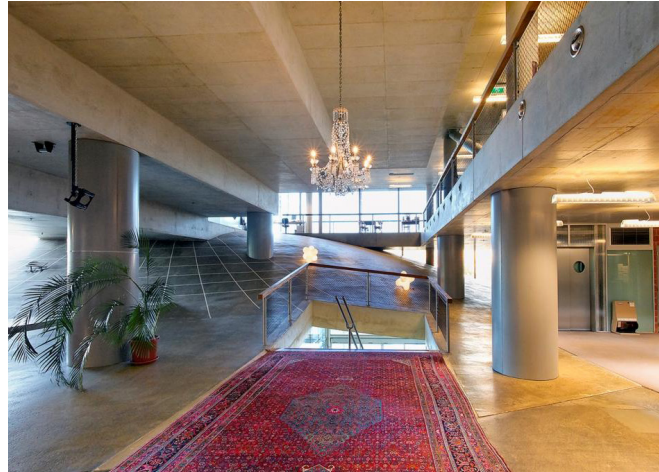
interior space in blue is inclusive, casual, communal space that encourages group dialogue. gray areas on perimeter provide more individual or formal space.

Villa VPRO

MVRDV
Completed 1997
Hilversum ,The Netherlands

MVRDV's design for the new office building of a broadcasting company sought to create an interconnected space that changed elevation through a variety of means beyond the standard staircase. The designers employed ramps, stepped floor and grand staircases- also used as alternative seating areas, to connect the 4 floors of the building.

Additionally, the buildings design brings the exterior lines into the space, extending the curves of the facade through to the interior of the office makes a strong connection to the outside. This technique also capitalizes on the desire to create a flow throughout the building from level to level. The use of concrete to call out the strong geometries of the space creates a continuity of line from exterior to interior.



site



area history

Neighborhood

Randolph is an historically black middle class neighborhood. The area is named after Virginia E. Randolph, an African-American woman who was a prominent educator in the Richmond area during the 19th century. The neighborhood is flanked by The Fan, Oregon Hill and Maymont. The close vicinity of VCU creates an opportunity for engagement between VCUarts students and the Randolph community.

In the early 1970's, a group of neighborhood activists worked closely with the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) to rebuild the neighborhood. Much of the area was razed and redeveloped, which caused many older residents to leave the neighborhood.

In response to concerns of gentrification, the redevelopment originally called for a large amount of low income housing. However, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) thought a high volume of low income housing in one area would create a concentration of people with minimal resources and the plan had to be reworked.

1981 saw the creation of new public housing and Section 8 subsidized rentals for low income residents. However, interest had been building for the development of private homes. This caused RRHA and HUB to reassess their plan. The new development plan was tagged as, "build a neighborhood, not a project". It's aim was to create a mixed income neighborhood. Initially, the original community disapproved of the plan. Following numerous community meetings, residents agreed to the new development plan.

The community was designed by UDA Architects. They focused on

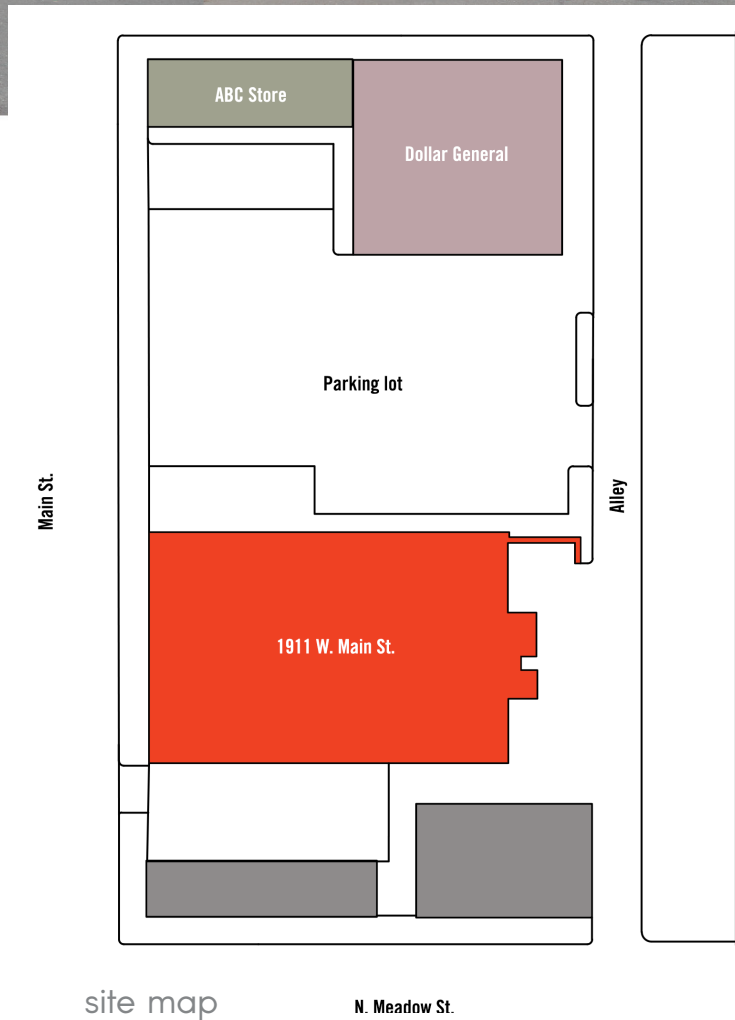
continuing to foster the current community. The development called for three parks, which created community space and drew home buyers who were concerned about a lack of green space in urban neighborhoods.

Currently, some of these homeowners still live in Randolph. However, the area has changed. Many homes have been purchases by investors and subsequently rented to VCU students. The changes in the area have taken away from the community that residents fought hard to develop.

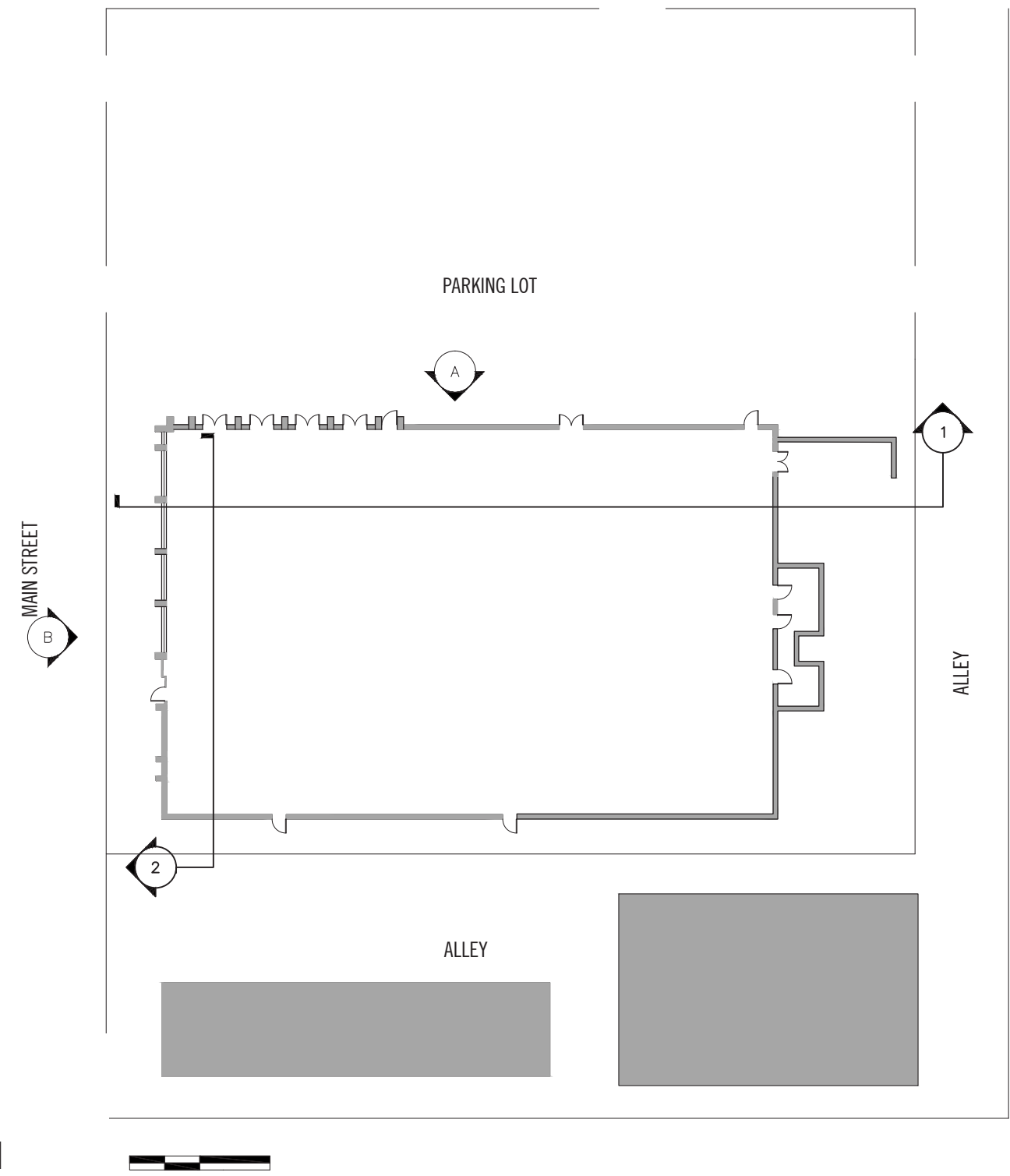
Site

1911 W. Main St. was built in 1950, serving the local community for many years as a grocery store. The building became home to Williamsville Brewery Ltd.- Main St. Beer Co. beginning in 1999. The space operated as a brewery until 2004 when the building was sold. In 2005, Martini Kitchen and Bubble Bar opened, closing its doors in November 2014. In summer 2015, it reopened as District 5.

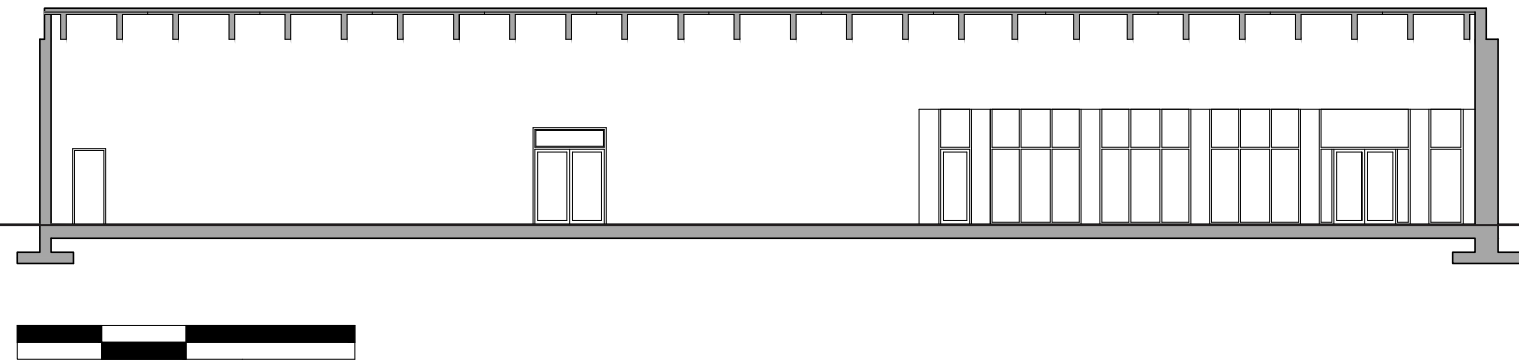




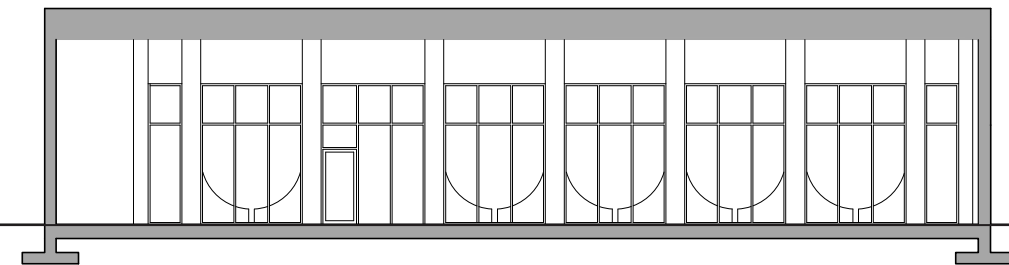
PLAN



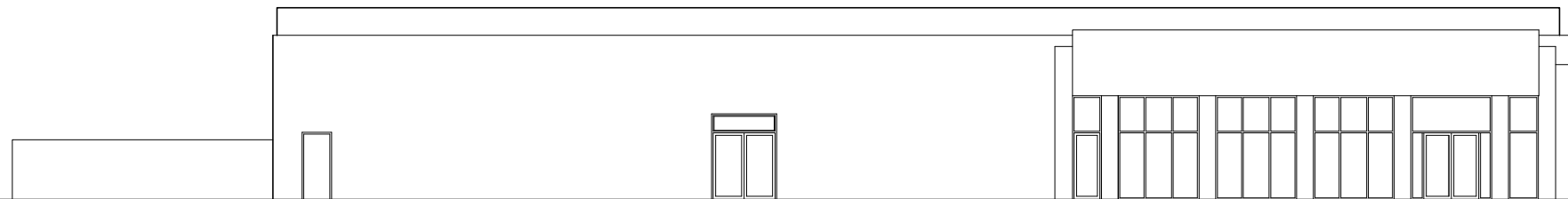
SECTION 1



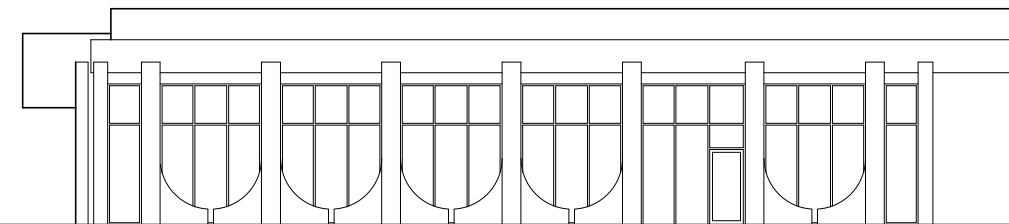
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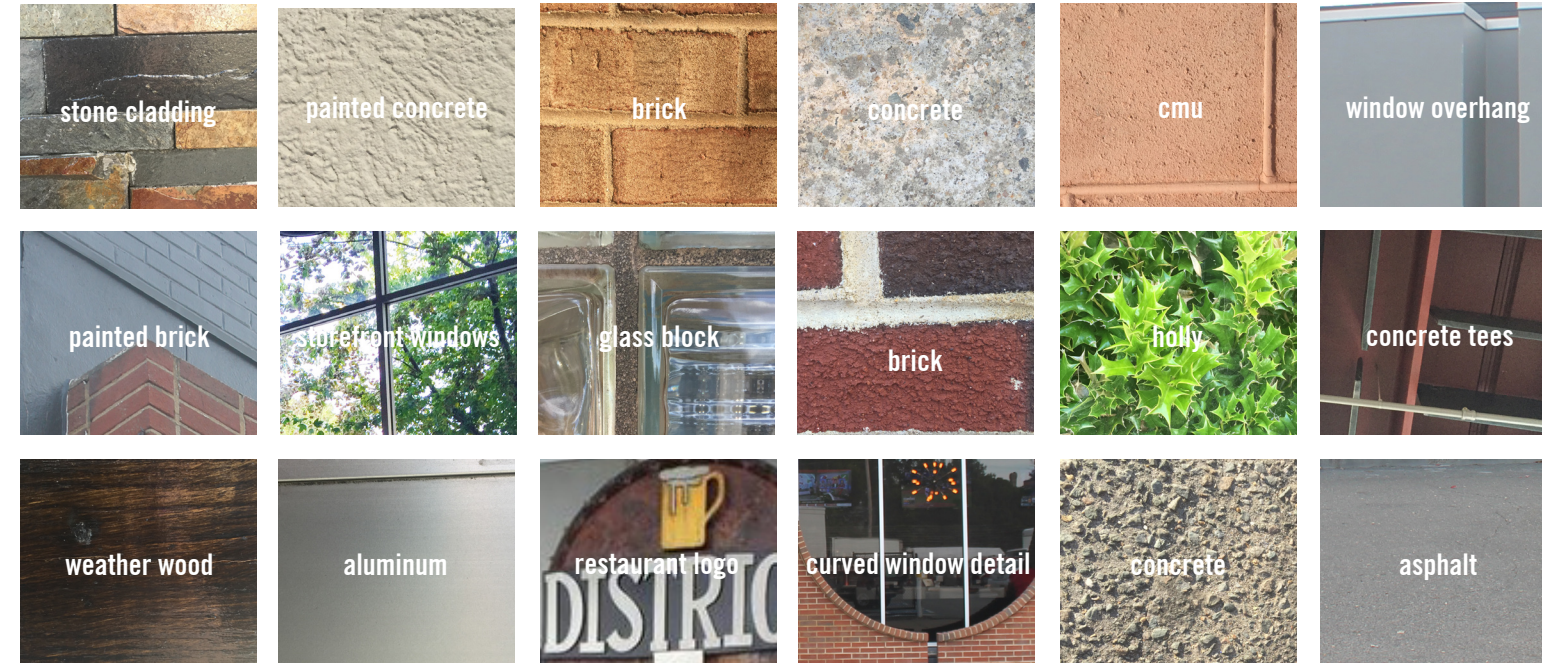
A- EAST EXTERIOR



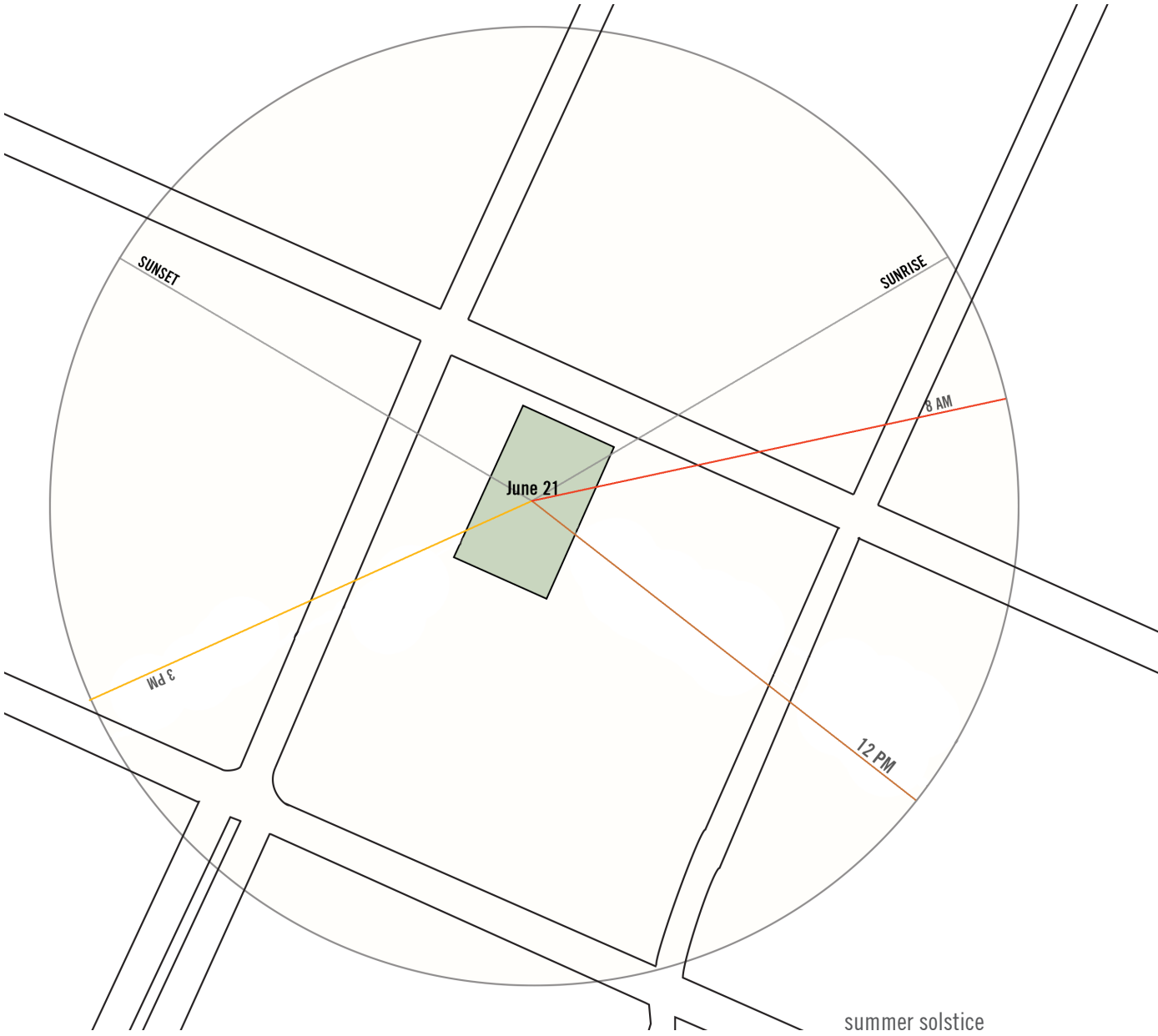
B- NORTH EXTERIOR

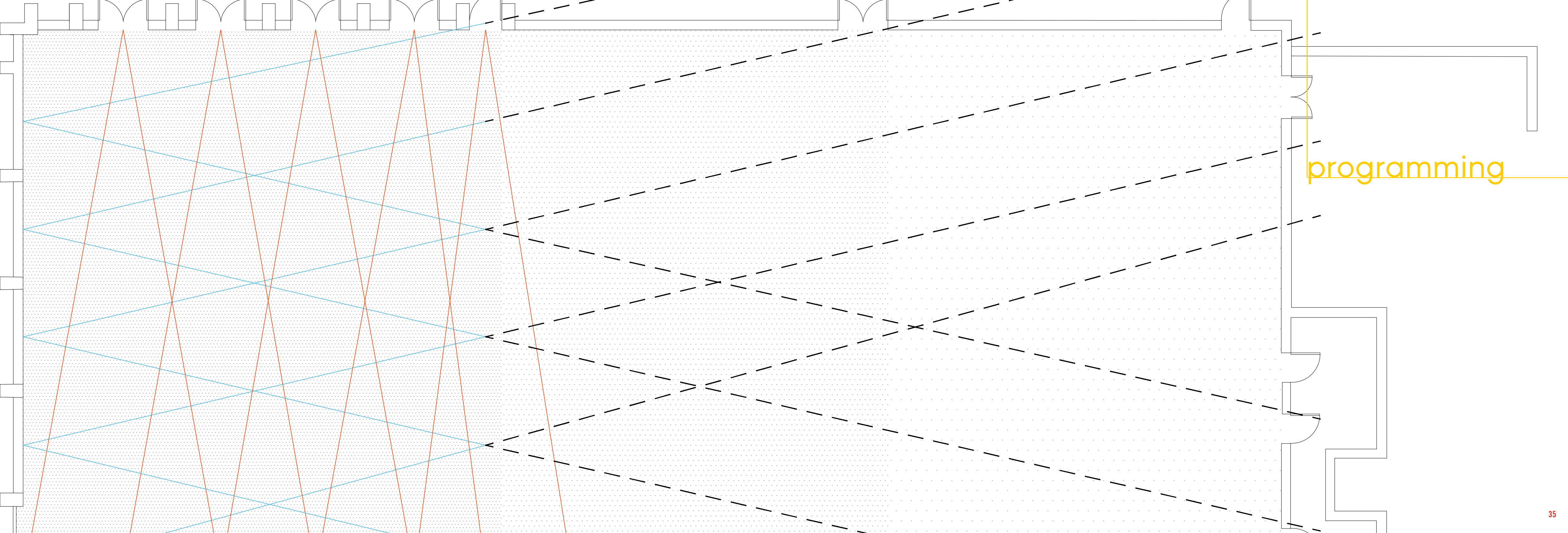


site study



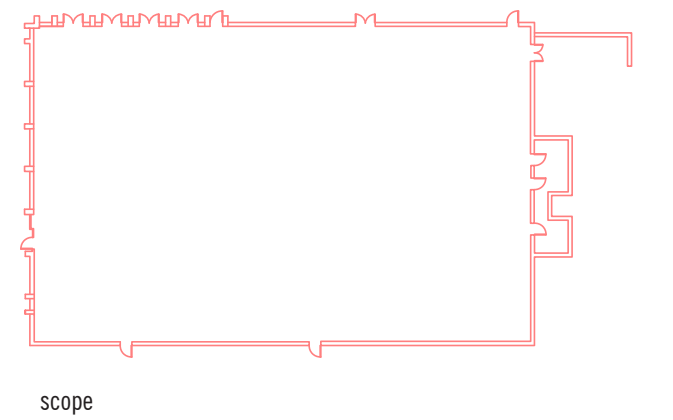
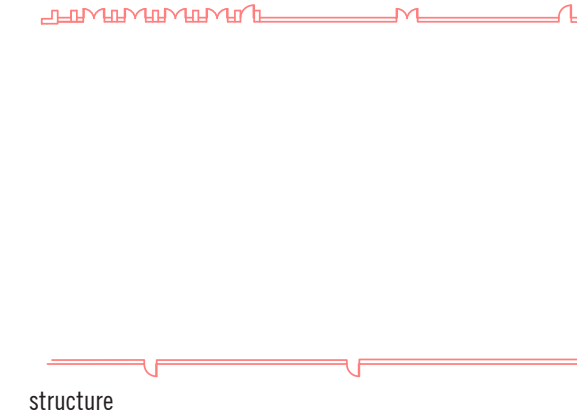
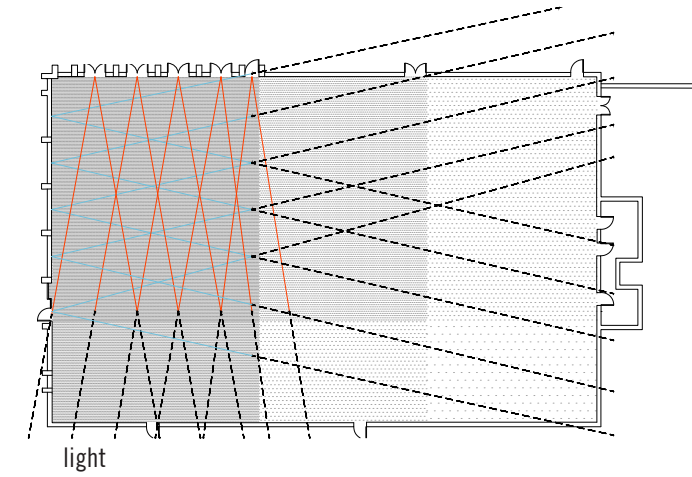
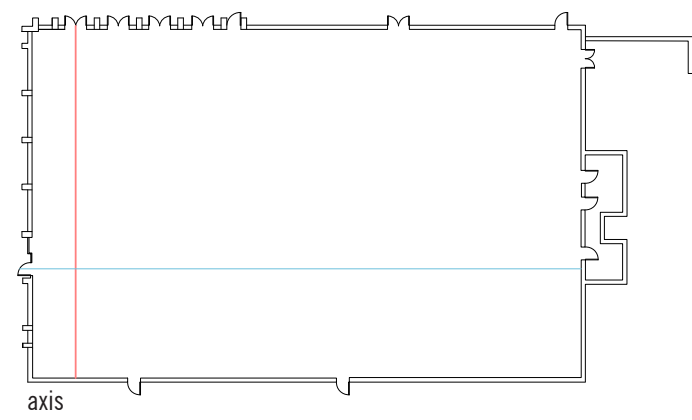
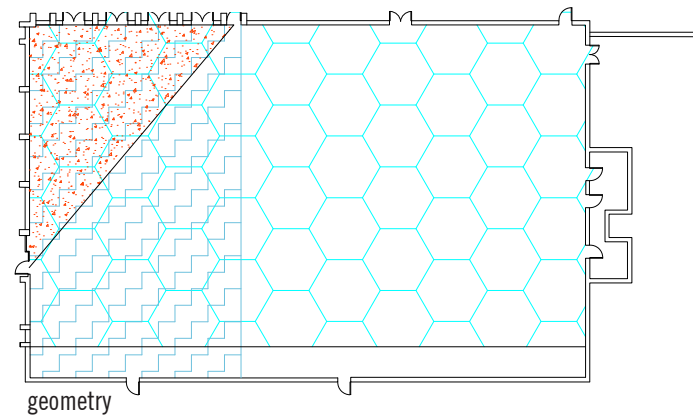
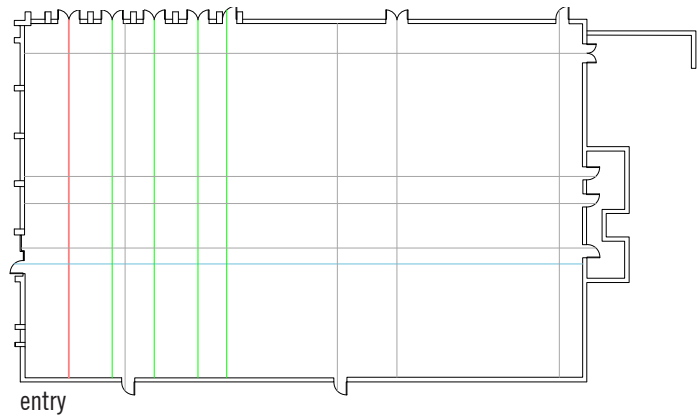
sun study



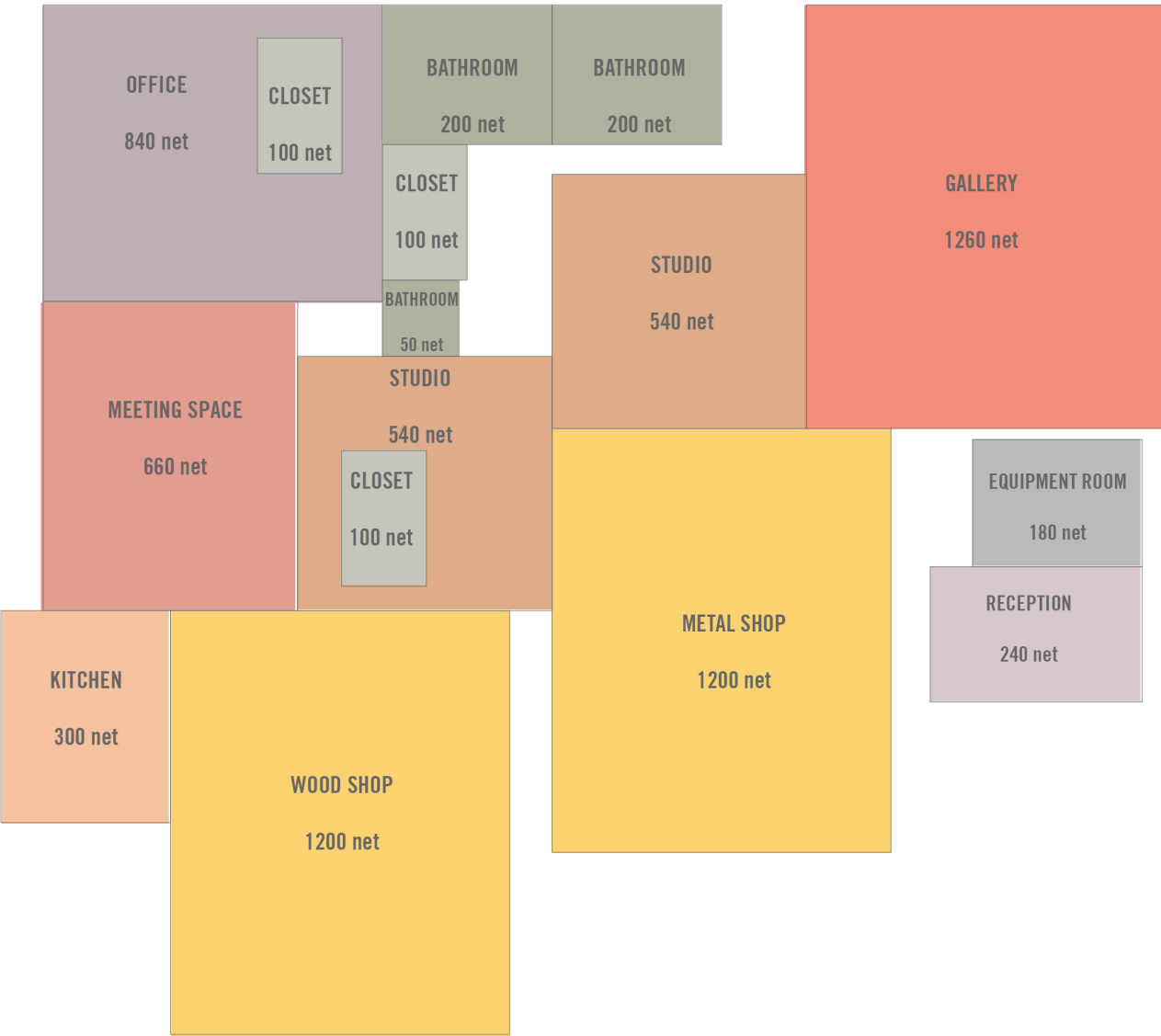
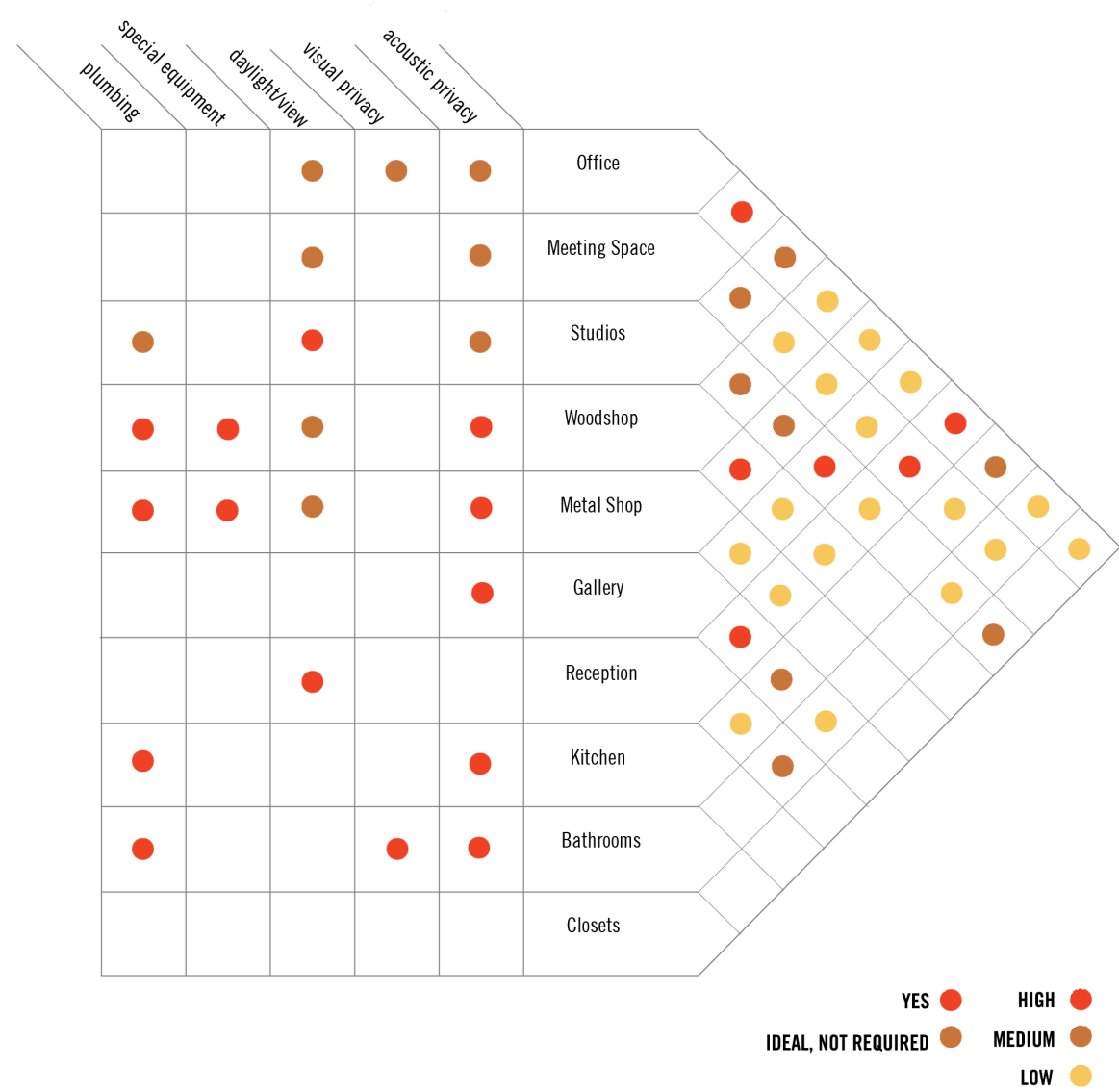


programming

parti diagrams



initial programming



	Design Studios	Wood Shop	Metal Shop	Gallery	Reception
Description	Two spaces where designers + students gather to explore design projects.	Space for crafting wood pieces. Used by designers + students. Heavy machinery.	Space for crafting metal pieces. Used by designers and students.	Used to display student work + design projects by local artists. Doubles as critique space.	Entry space of building.
Time of usage	Periodically throughout the day. Used daily.	Periodically throughout the day. Used daily.	Periodically throughout the day. Used daily.	Open to the public 9AM-5PM	9AM-6PM
Net area	540 sq ft	1200 sq ft	1200 sq ft	1260 sq ft	240 sq ft
Activities	Group work. Model making. Drafting.	Furniture creation, custom design pieces.	Furniture creation, custom design pieces.	View art and design projects.	Greet guests, answer questions, direct visitors.
User	Designer - Student	Designer - Student	Designer - Student	Designer - Staff - Student - Public	Designer- Staff- Student - Public
Specific ffe	Standing height desks, drafting tables, light box.	Woodworking machines, tools, workbenches, ventilation system	Metal working machines, tools, workbenches, ventilation system	Movable lighting system.	Desk + multi-person seating
Accessibility	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Acoustic privacy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
Visual privacy	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
Physical privacy	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
Occupancy	8	10	10	15	2
Max occupancy load	10	15	15	30	4
Important adjacencies	Office space, wood shop + metal shop	Office space, design studio + metal shop	Office space, wood shop + design studio	Reception + meeting space	Gallery, meeting space + bathrooms

Office Space	Meeting Space	Kitchen	Bathrooms	Closets
Area where designers are stationed.	Space for large groups to gather. Used for events + to address the students as a group.	Kitchenette with small dining space.	One per gender. One water closet.	3 closets housing supplies for daily use, art supplies + cleaning materials.
9AM-6PM	3PM-6PM	Periodically throughout the day. Used daily.	Periodically throughout the day. Used daily.	Periodically throughout the day. Used daily.
840 sq ft	660 sq ft	300 sq ft	200 sq ft each per gender 50 sq ft water closet	100 sq ft each
Administrative, individual design work	Assemblies + events	Eating + prepping food for events		Storage
Designer- Staff	Designer - Staff - Student - Public	Designer	Designer - Student - Public	Designer - Student
Desks, chairs, task lighting, break away furniture	Folding tables + chairs	Sink, fridge, tables + seating	Toilets + sinks	Shelving
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
✓	✓	✓	✓	✗
✗	✓	✗	✓	✓
✓	✓	✗	✓	✓
12	10	8	5	1
15	30	10	3	1
Reception + design studio	Reception + gallery	Office space + meeting space		Design studio

3	
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CONCLUSION

SCHEMATIC

Design development



conceptual

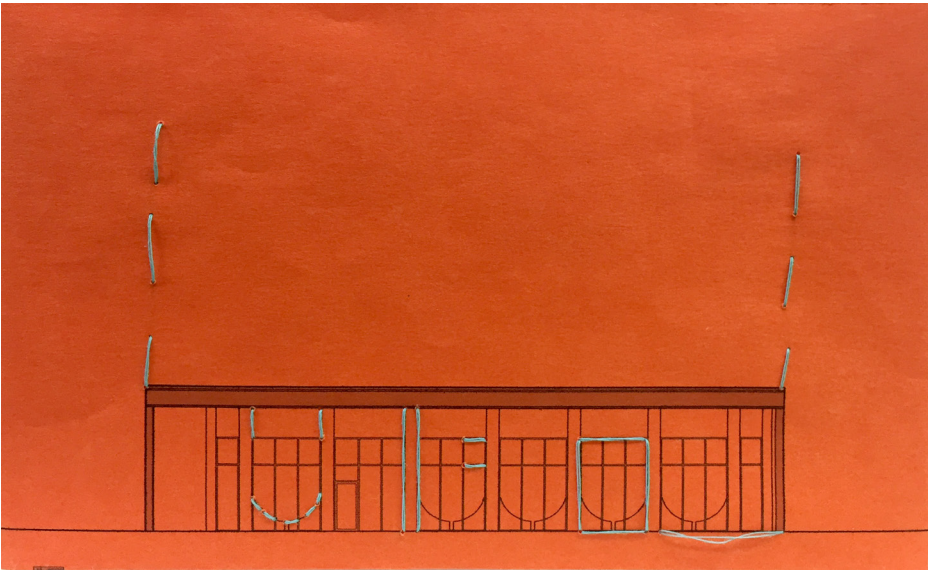
Conceptual design began with the 30x30x30 project. Creating a series of 2D images and 3D models drawing on important concepts within the research led to discovers about the orientation of interior space. Work was largely inspired by a series of drivers related to the aspirations of the project.

“For a songwriter, you don’t really go to songwriting school; you learn by listening to tunes. And you try to understand them and take them apart and see what they’re made of, and wonder if you can make one, too.”

- Tom Waits



TEACH



BUILDING LINE ANALYSIS



INSPIRE

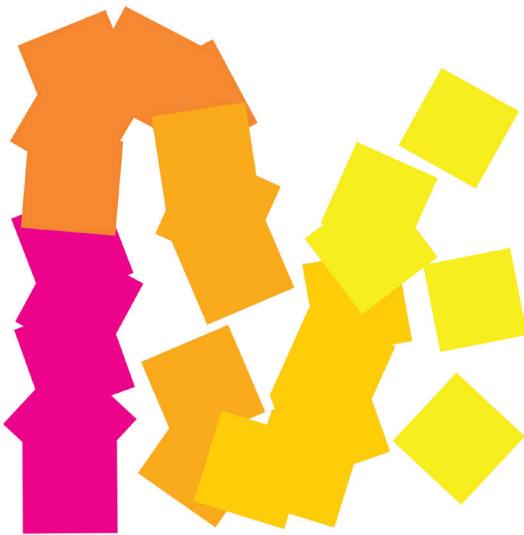


INCLUSIVE

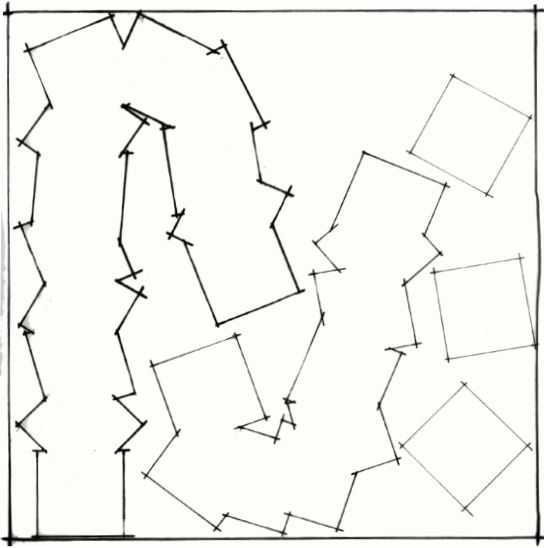


COMMUNITY

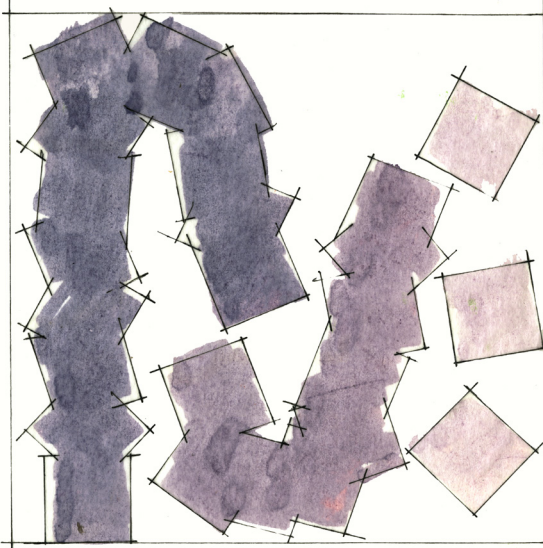
Taking important discoveries from the 30x30x30 exercise and diving deeper into the conceptual exploration of certain drivers led to a series of 2D and 3D pieces. The example below looks at the wealth and ownership. In researching the lack of diversity in design and the societal influences for this, an understanding of wealth and income inequality played an important role.



ORIGINAL COLLAGE



COLLAGE TRACING



SHADOW STUDY

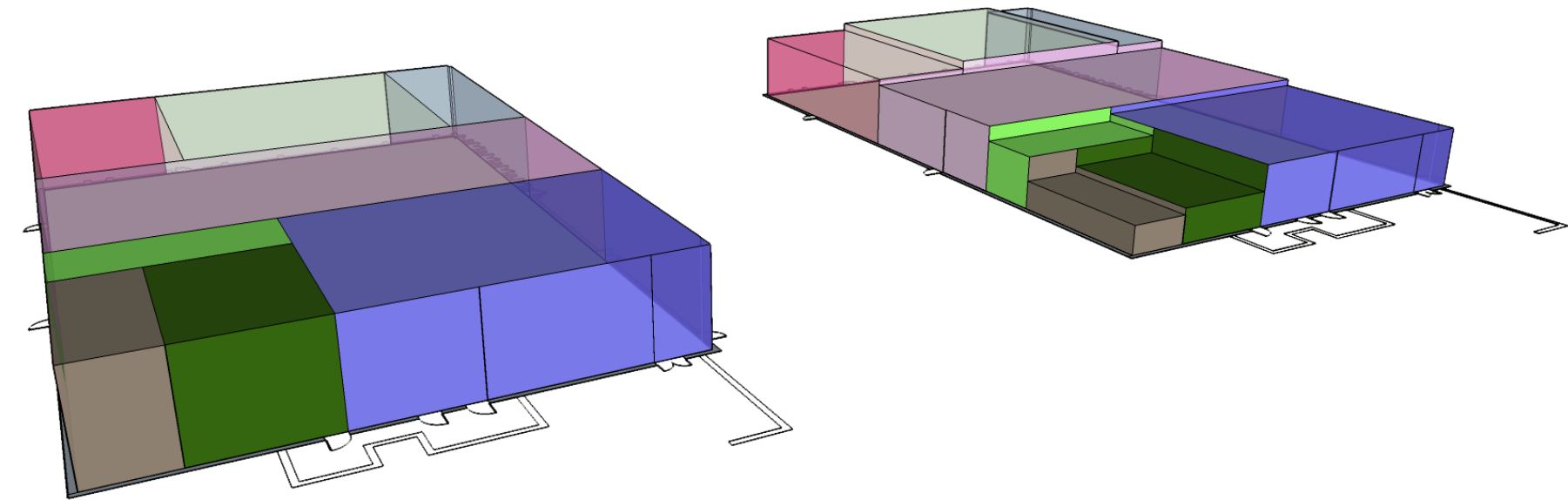
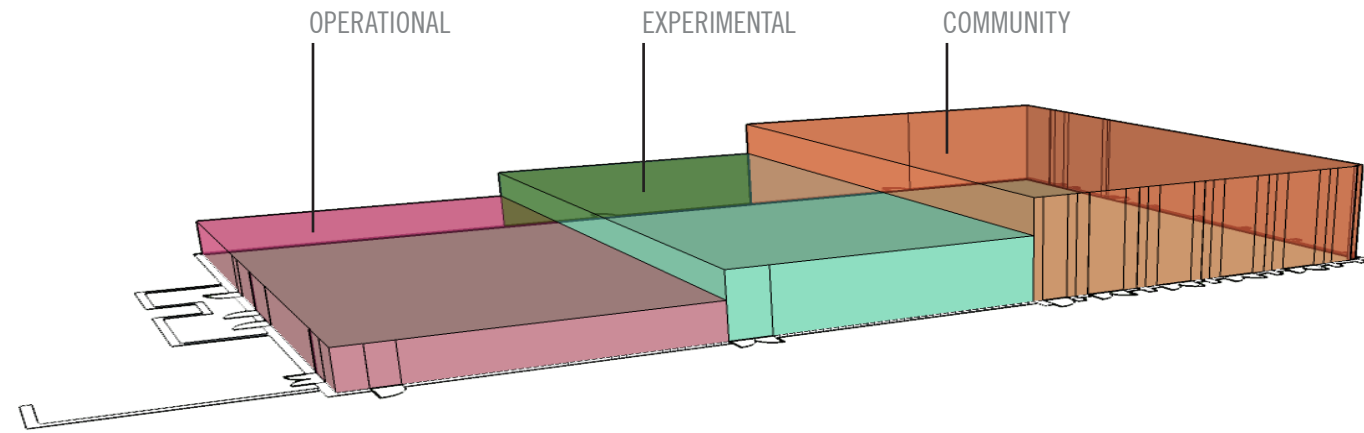


3D INTERPRETATION



Visual representations of reaching out into the community

Conceptual studies of spaces within the building. Looking at types of spaces, light and function.



PUBLIC

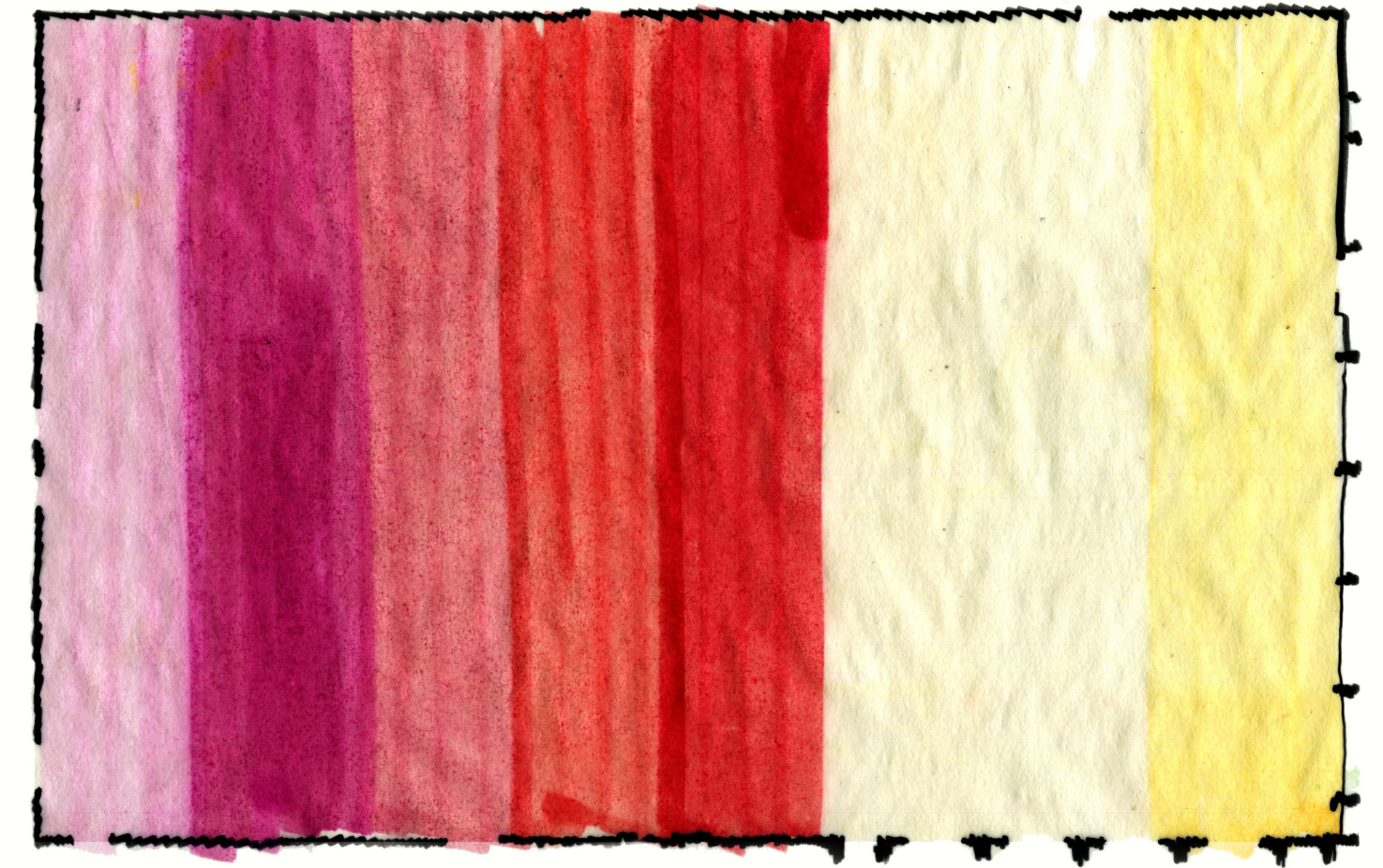
- GALLERY
- MEETING
- RECEPTION

BETWEEN

- STUDIOS
- SHOPS

PRIVATE

- OFFICE
- BATHROOMS
- KITCHEN



PRIVATE
DARK

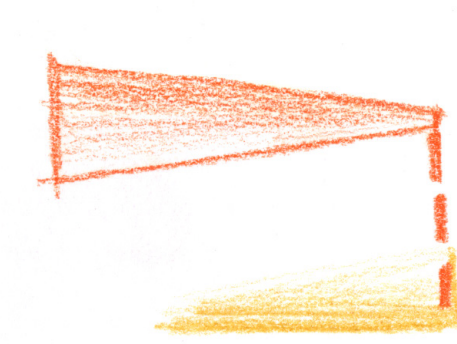
TO
TO

PUBLIC
LIGHT

Concept

Education is a constant give and take. Educators give themselves to educate the young because they value a community of informed citizens and realize the importance of each child receiving an education as it has been an important path for their own opportunity.

Despite this selflessness, students don't always reciprocate. They lack life experience or have been taught to value alternatives to education. Educators know that the return for investing in their students now is a future with more engaged, thoughtful adults.



Give is greater and inspires taker to give to a new taker



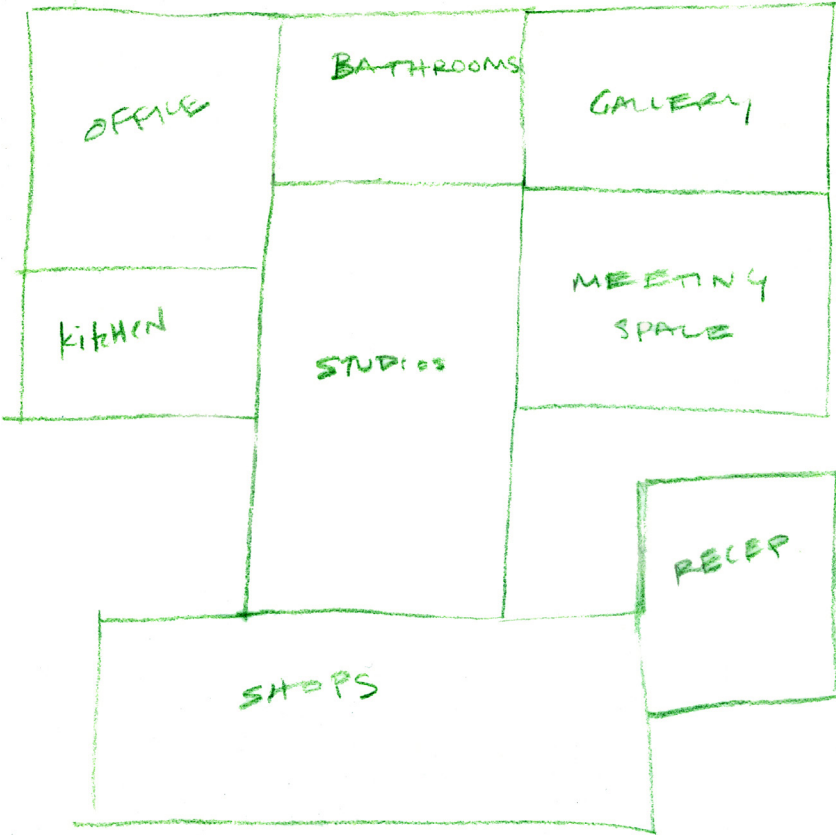
Taker becomes giver

Metaphorically, the give and take between educator + student can be seen as a tree, old + experienced, giving itself to a fire in order to provide nourishment for the greater good. As the tree burns, it becomes ash which provides important minerals necessary for the growth of the younger tree.

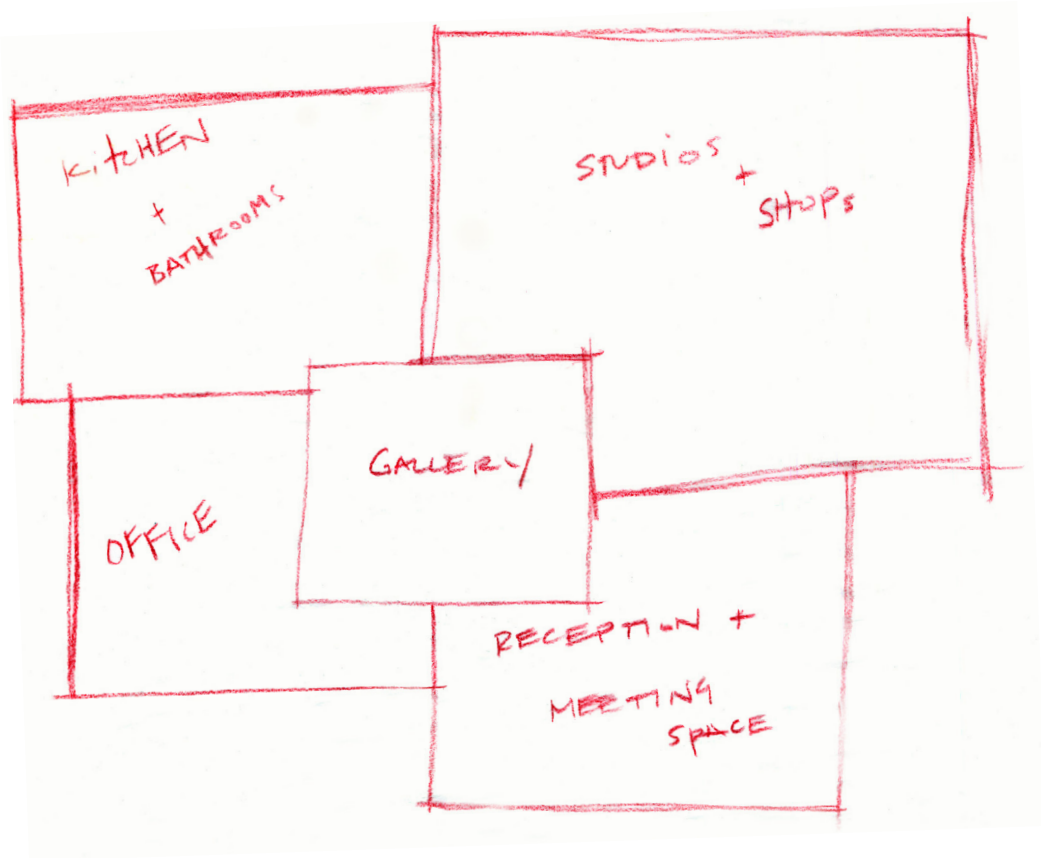


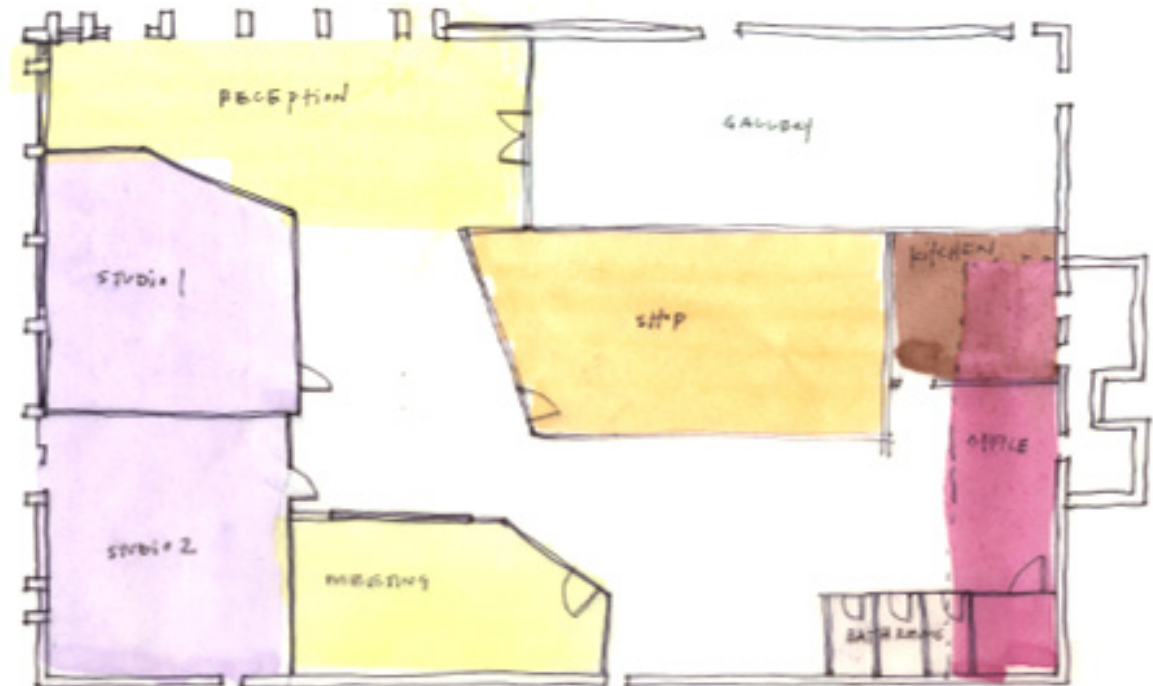
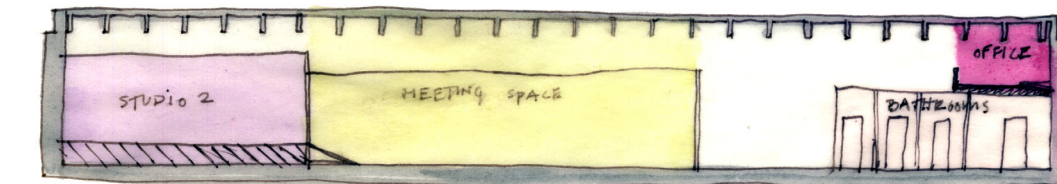
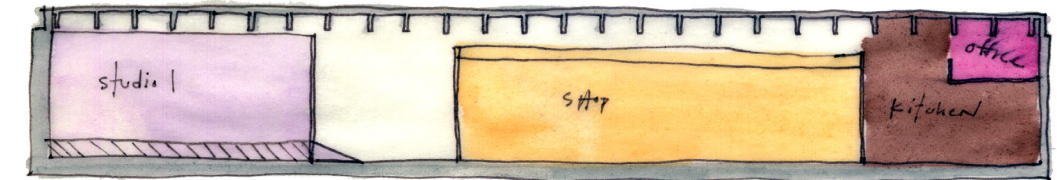
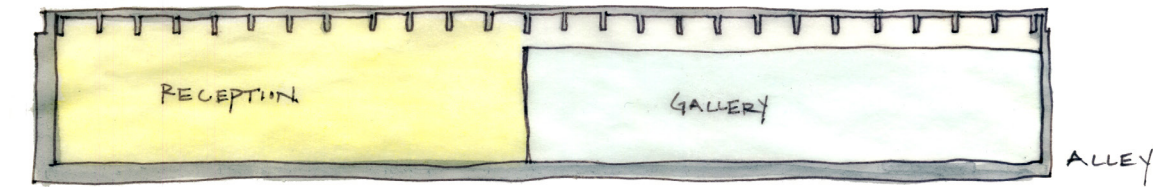
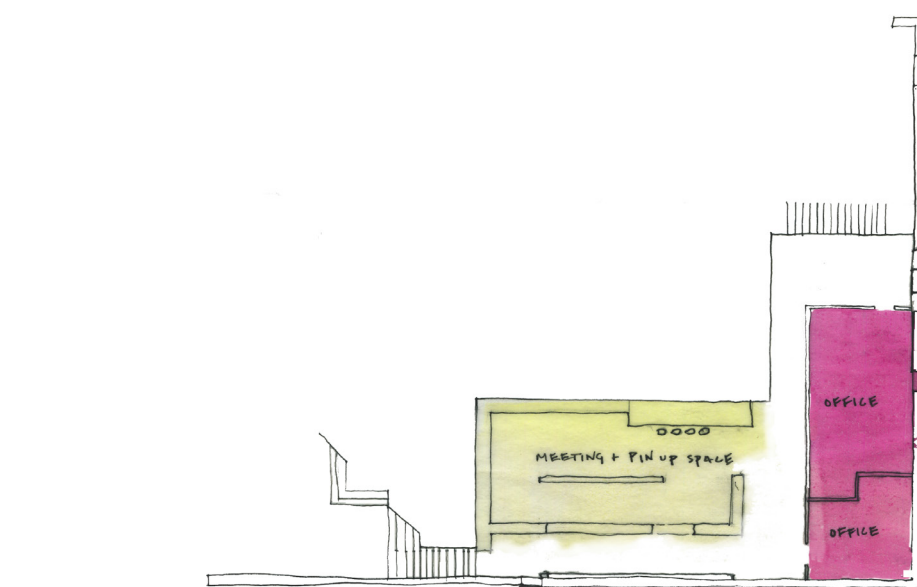
schematic

The schematic design process started with general diagrams of the anticipated areas within the building and developed into solidified plans, sections and elevations. Over the course of the schematic phase, original programming changed as new ideas were generated. The wood and metal shops became a single shop space. A second level was added with pin up and critique space. Additionally, the gallery space was redesigned to be an open area and was moved to the middle of the building



BLOCK DIAGRAMS





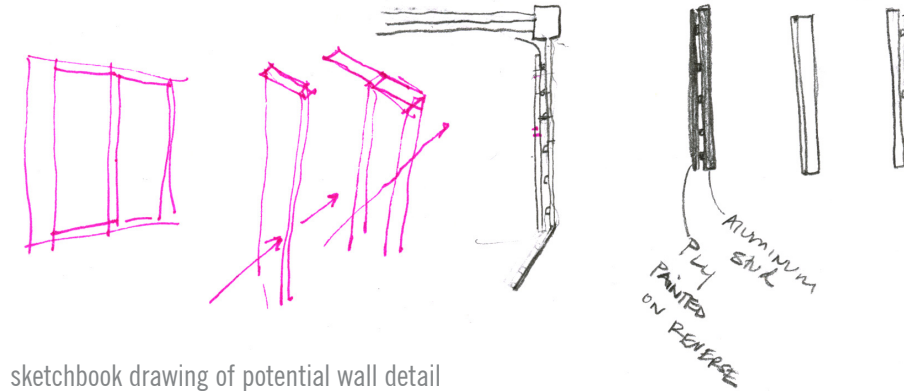
design development

Honing in on spatial layout, bringing concept into form and developing a variety of drawings to express the nature of the space were the main focuses of the design development phase. Much of the time spent was going over previous iterations of drawings to tighten the link between concept and physical space.

- site materials
 - ▷ brick
 - ↳ rough (texture)
 - ▷ dirt (smell)
 - ▷ hard (sound)
 - ▷ glass
 - ▷ smooth (texture)
 - ▷ hard (sound)
 - ▷ warm or cold (temp.)
 - ▷ aluminum
 - ↳ smooth (texture)
 - ▷ metallic (smell)
 - ▷ cold (temp.)
 - ▷ echo (sound)
 - ▷ concrete
 - ↳ smooth (texture)
 - ▷ cold (temp.)
 - ▷ hard (sound)
 - ▷ asphalt
 - ↳ rough (texture)
 - ▷ tar (smell)
 - ▷ large aggregate
 - brick / concrete?

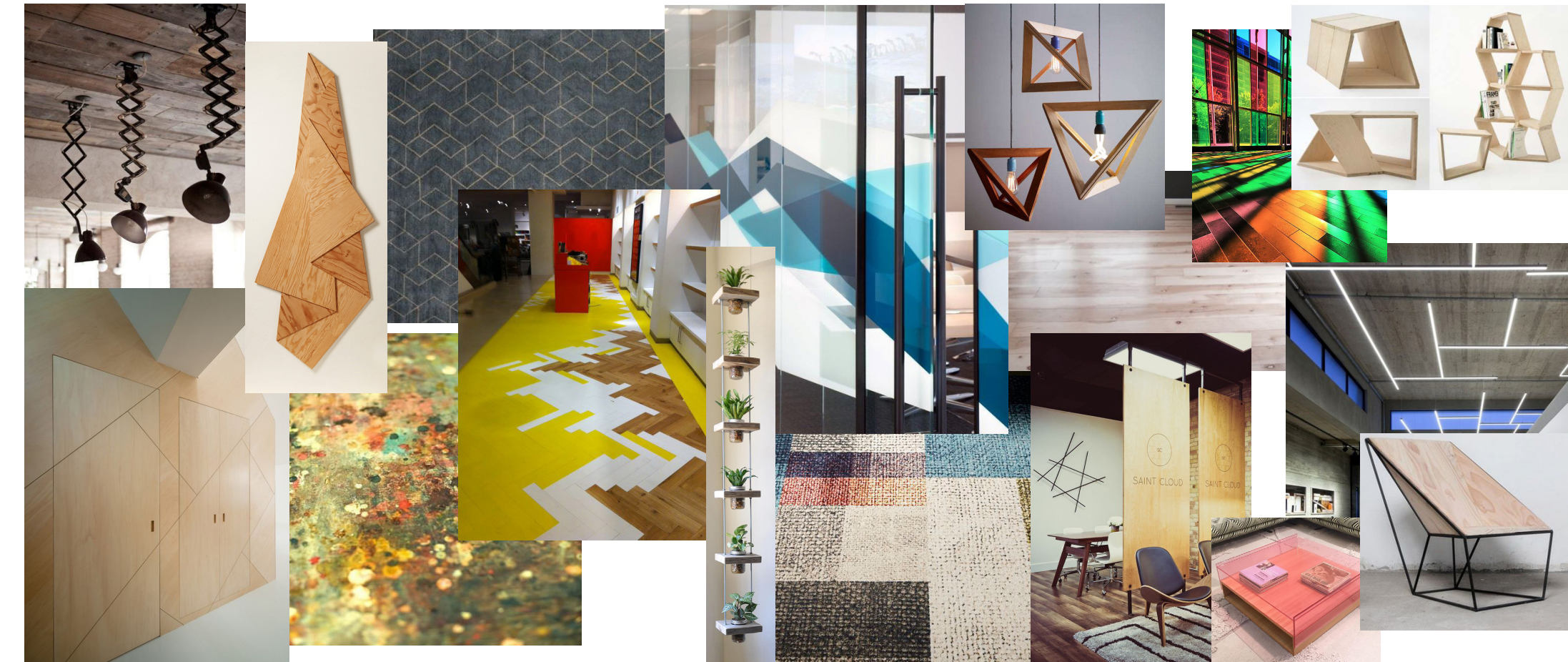
site analysis to help address potential interior materiality

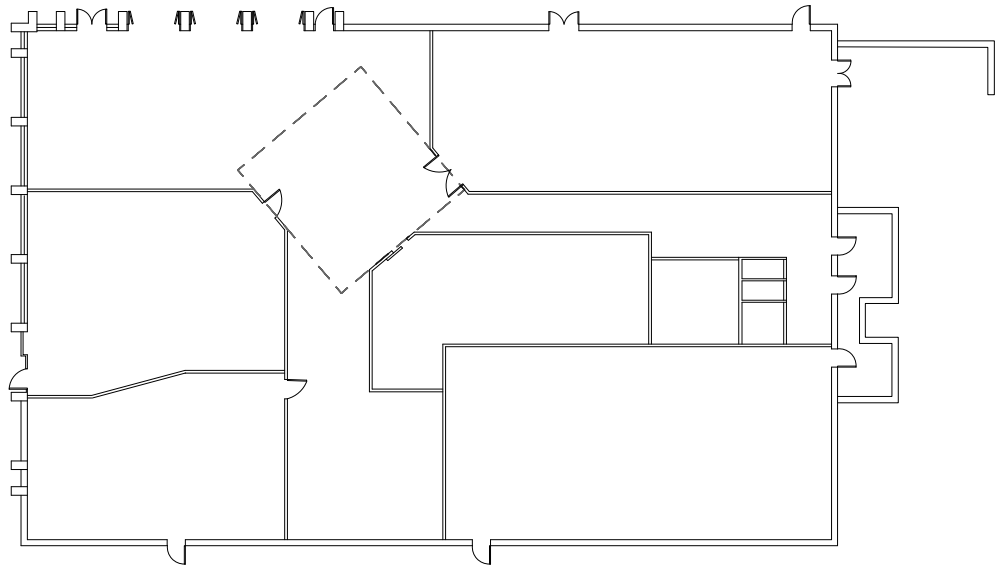
site analysis to help address potential interior materiality



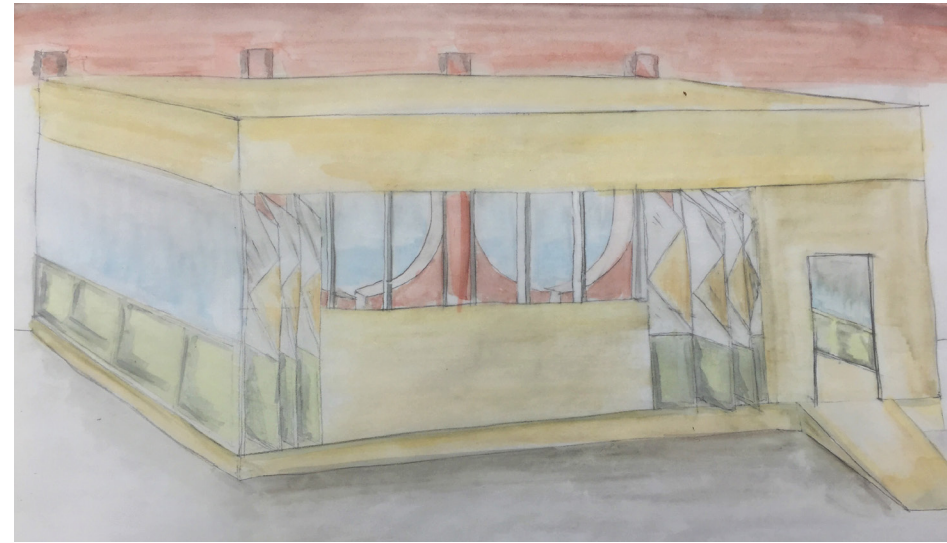
sketchbook drawing of potential wall detail

FF+E Inspiration

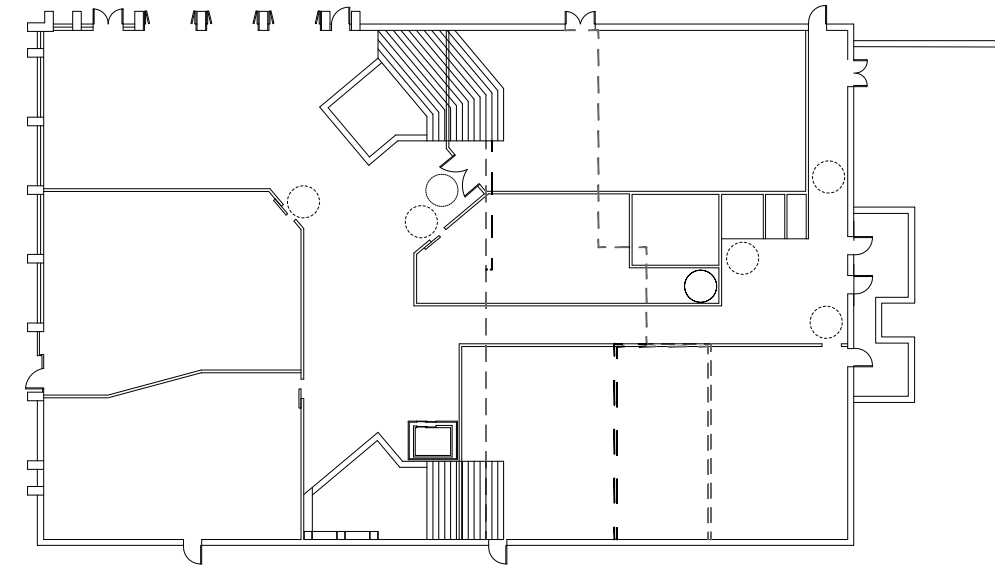




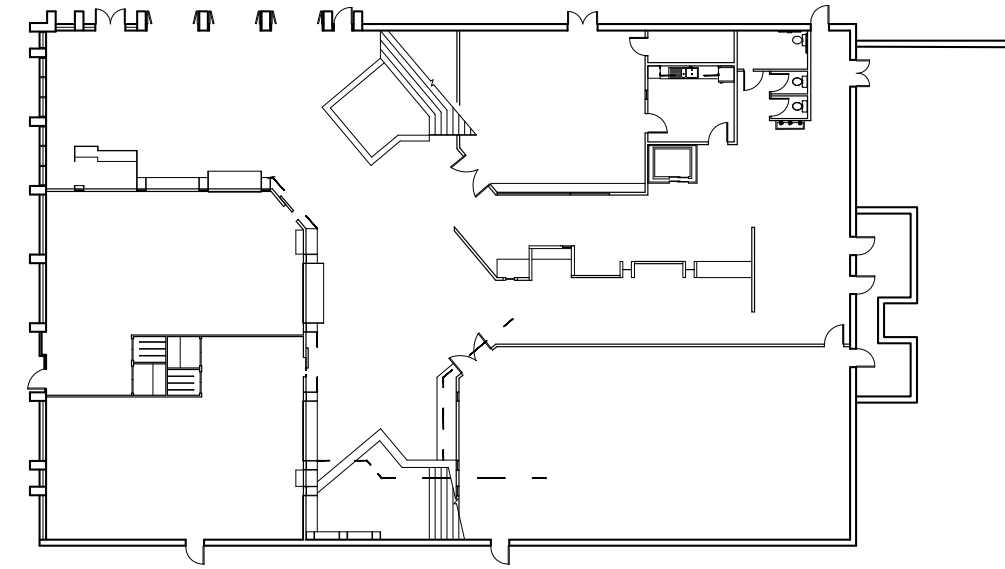
Initial Plan



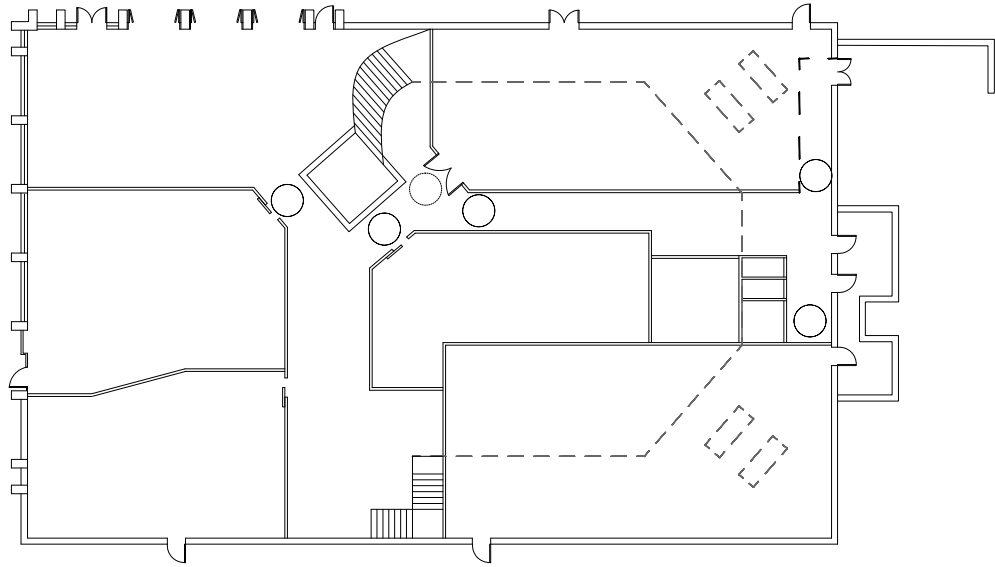
Sketch of studio exterior from initial plan



Edit Two



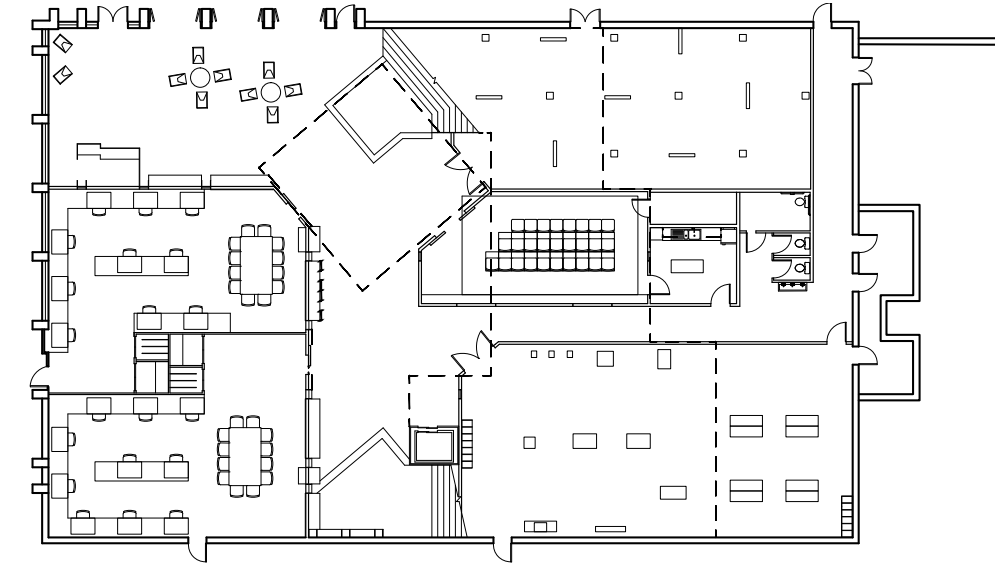
Edit Four



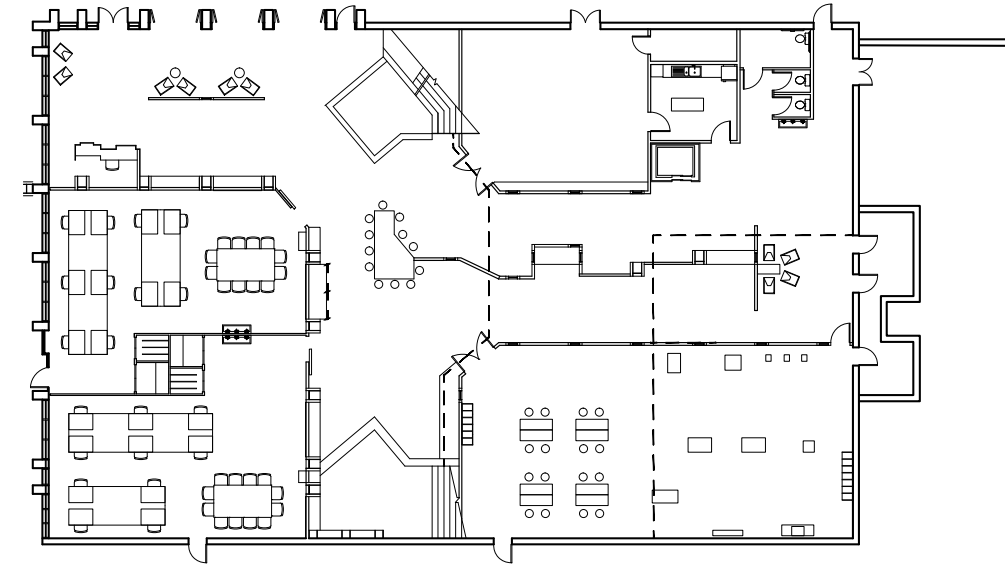
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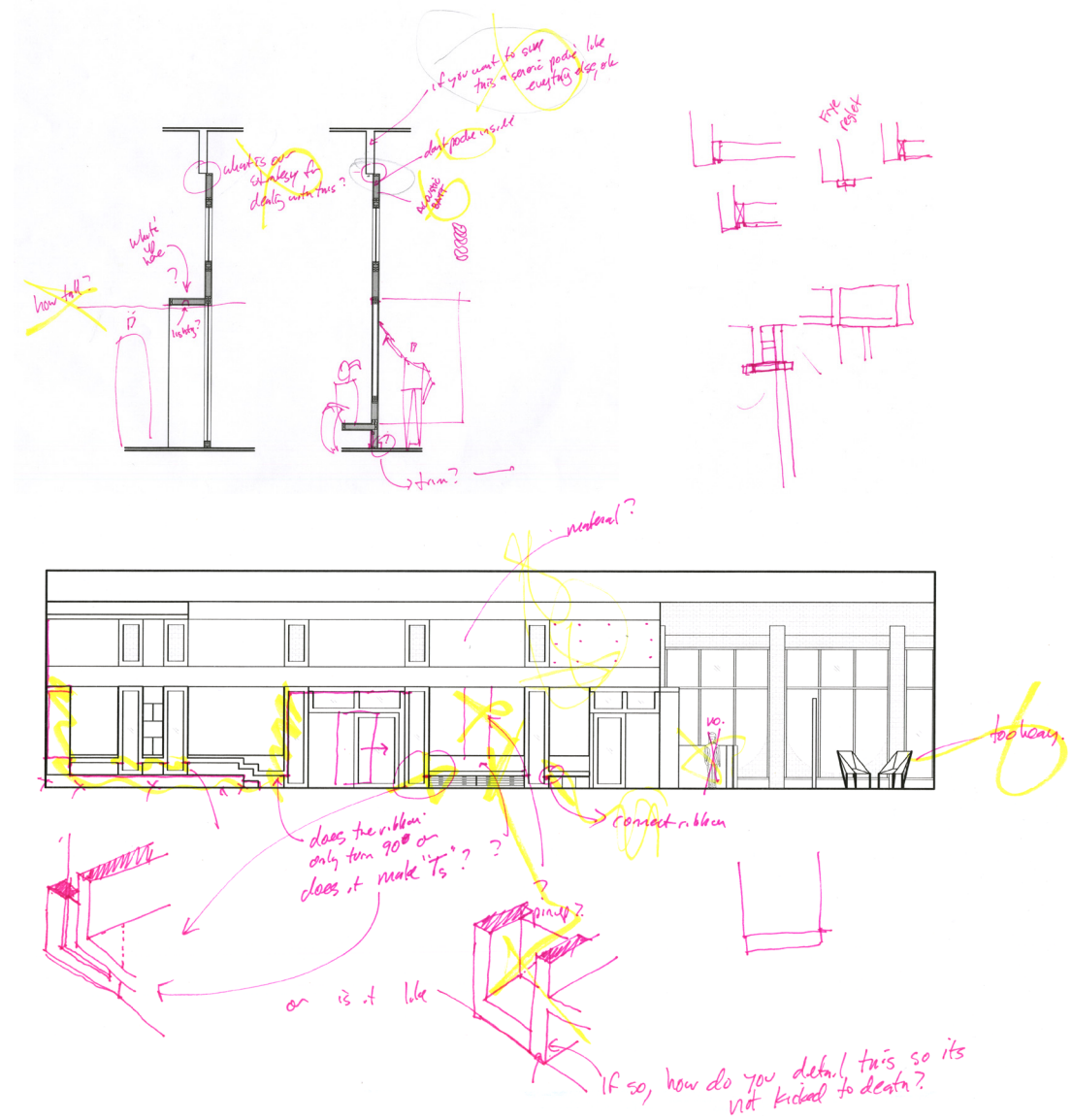
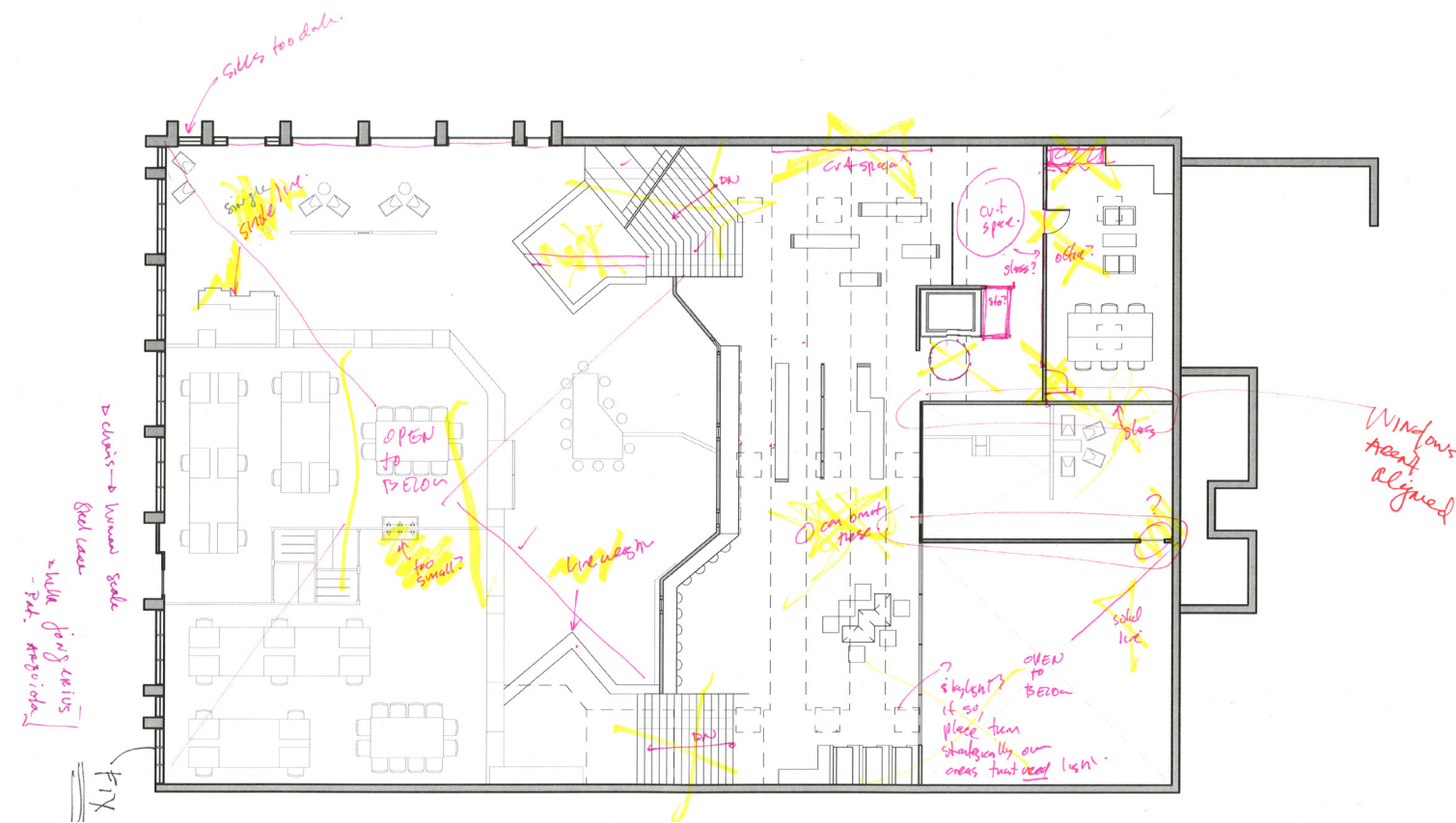
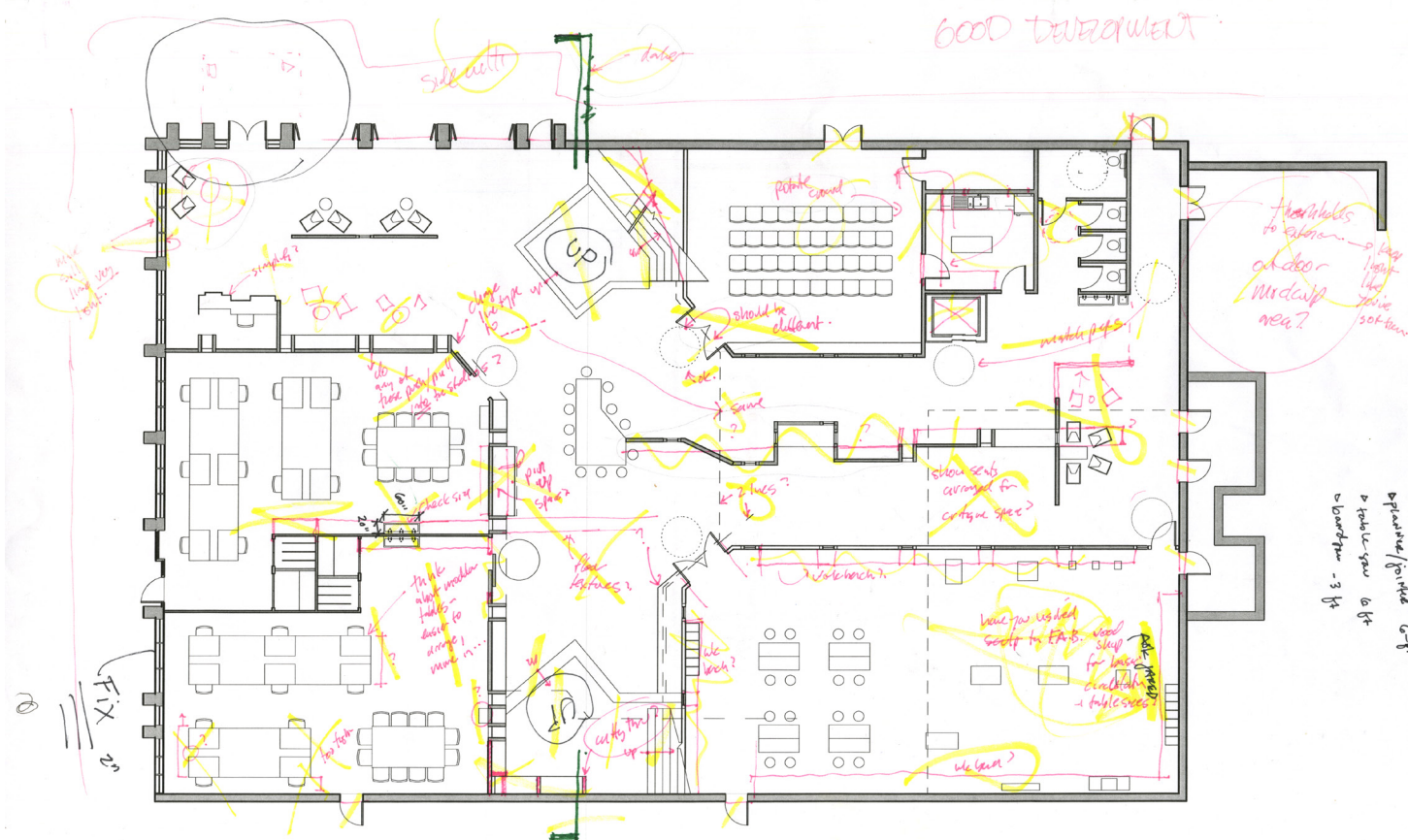
Sketch of reception from initial plan



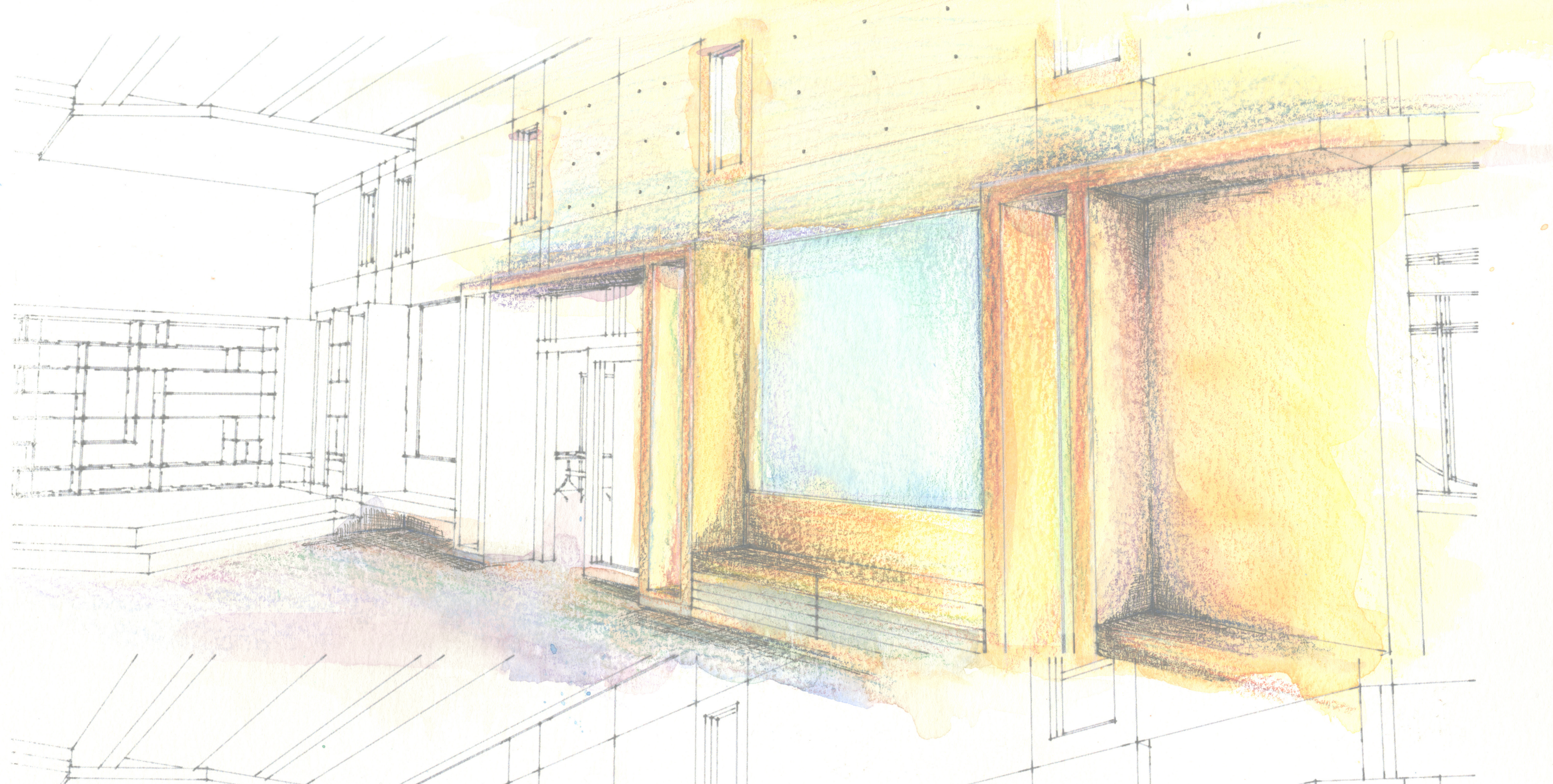
Edit Three

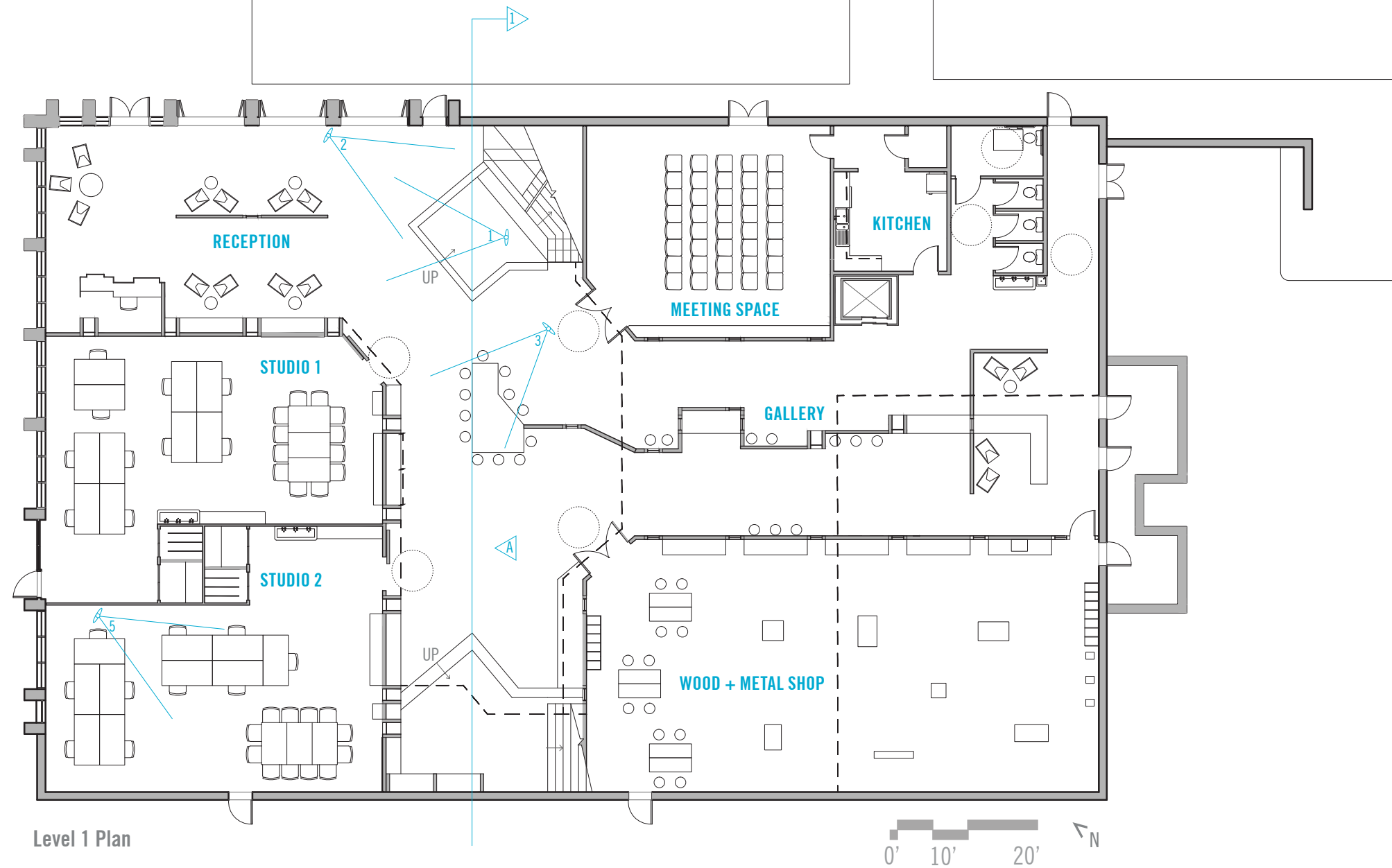


Edit Five

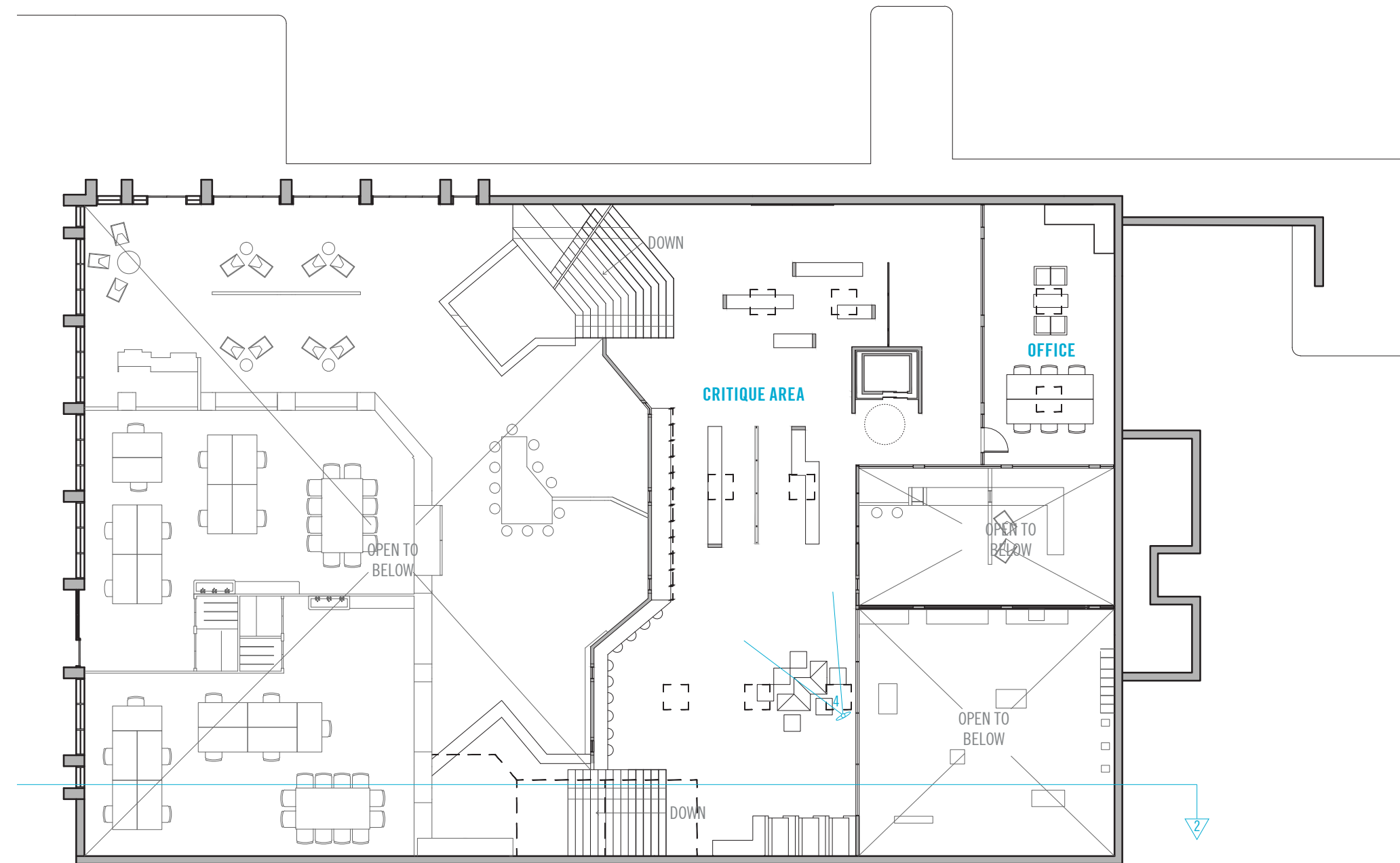


presentation content

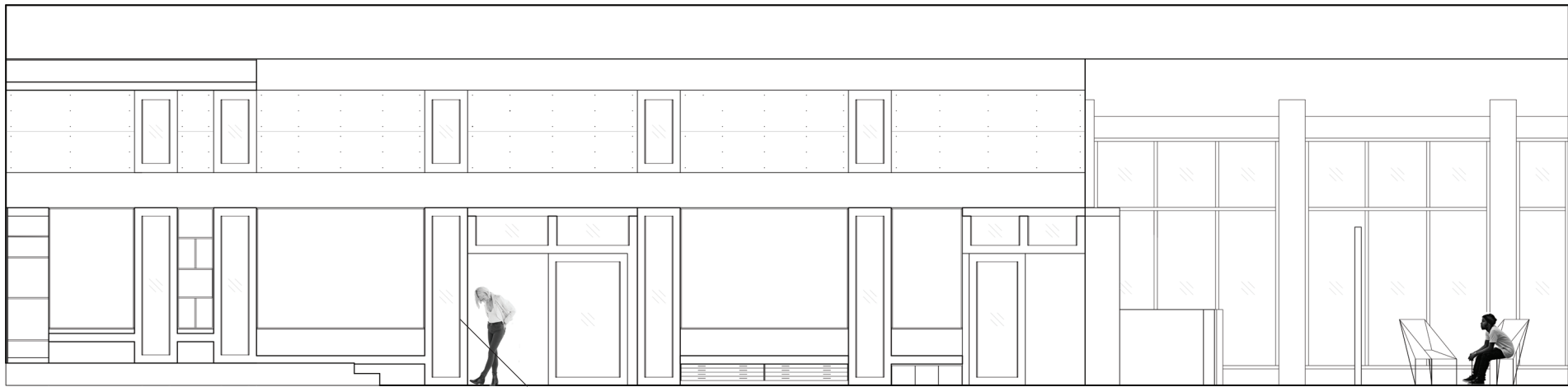




Level 1 Plan

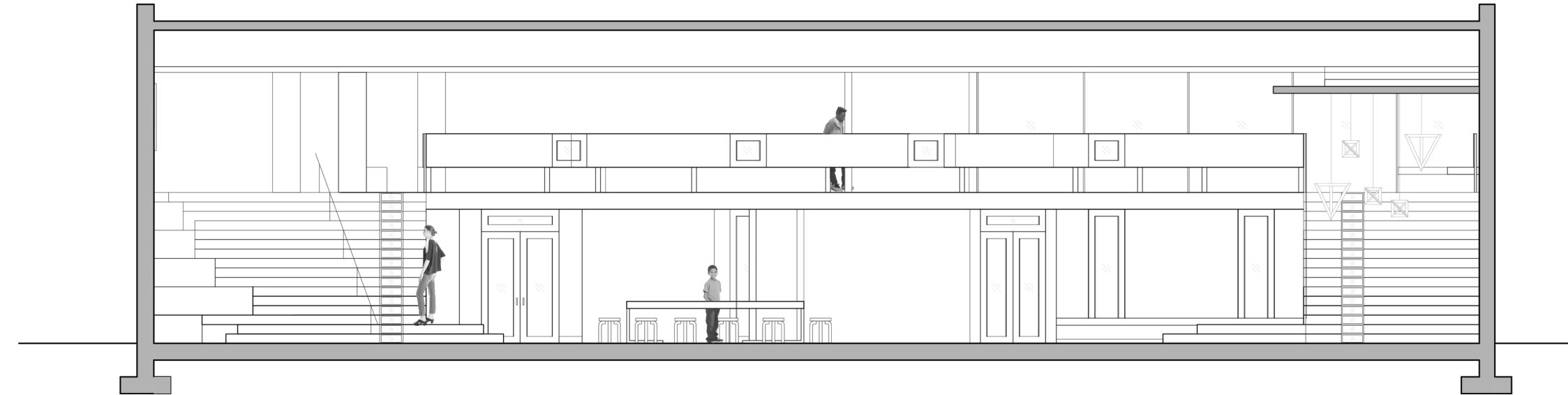


Level 2 Plan

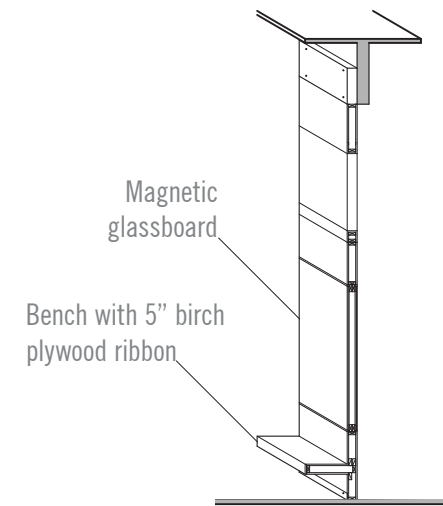


Studio Ribbon Wall Elevation_A

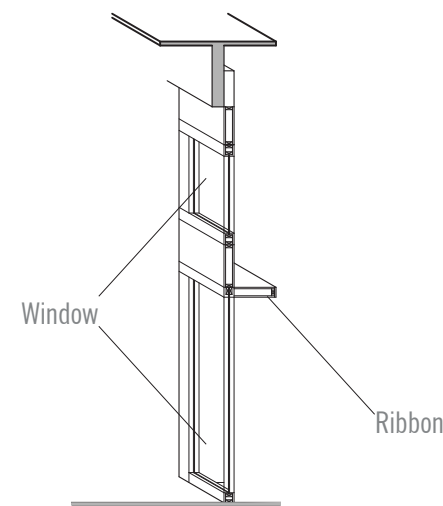
0' 10' 20'



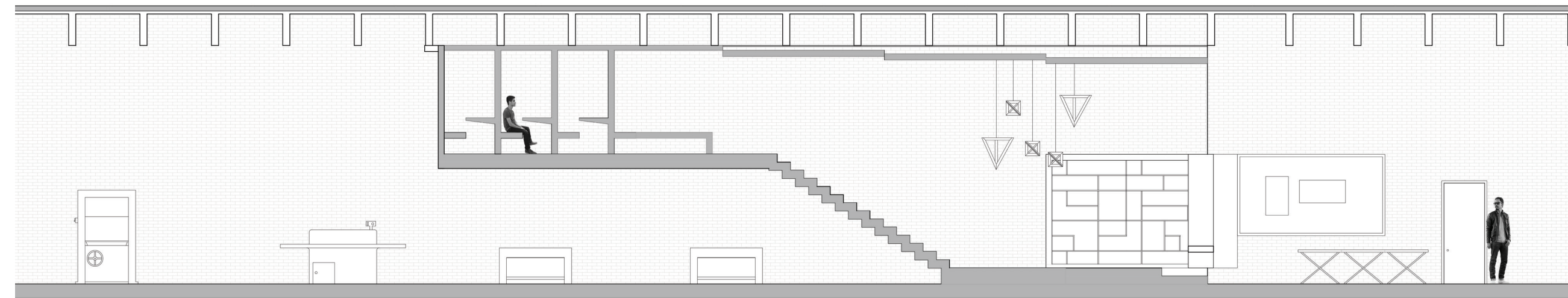
Critique Area + Community Stair₁



Axon cut through bench of ribbon



Axon cut through window of ribbon



Level 2 Seating + Stair Section₂

Reception,

A bright area welcoming families, students and other guests. Furnishings within reception and throughout the building aim to showcase classic and modern pieces within the design world to be used as precedents for students learning in the space.

FF+E



Polygon Wire table | Herman Miller | Studio 7.5



Linon chair | Alberto Vitello



Eames Wire Base Low table | Herman Miller | Charles + Ray Eames



Optical Light pendant | Lee Broom



Tropicalia lounge chair | Patricia Urquiola



Ribbon Wall₃

A continuous ribbon of birch plywood frames the studio entrances, then runs through the space using rectilinear lines and turning corners to become various surfaces with which users can engage.

FF+E



Lightframe wood pendant lamp | Herr Mandel

MATERIALS



Clarus Glassboards
Magnetic, Pop teal



Plexwood
Birch, oil/wax finish



Birch plywood



Studio₅

Open area with large work surfaces. Brightly lit by large storefront windows. Looking out onto W. Main St., the activity within the studios creates a dialogue with pedestrians, drawing them into explore the space.

FF+E



Mayline Ranger Drafting table



Qivi chair | Steelcase



Shortcut stool | Steelcase



Nelson X-leg table | Herman Miller | George Nelson



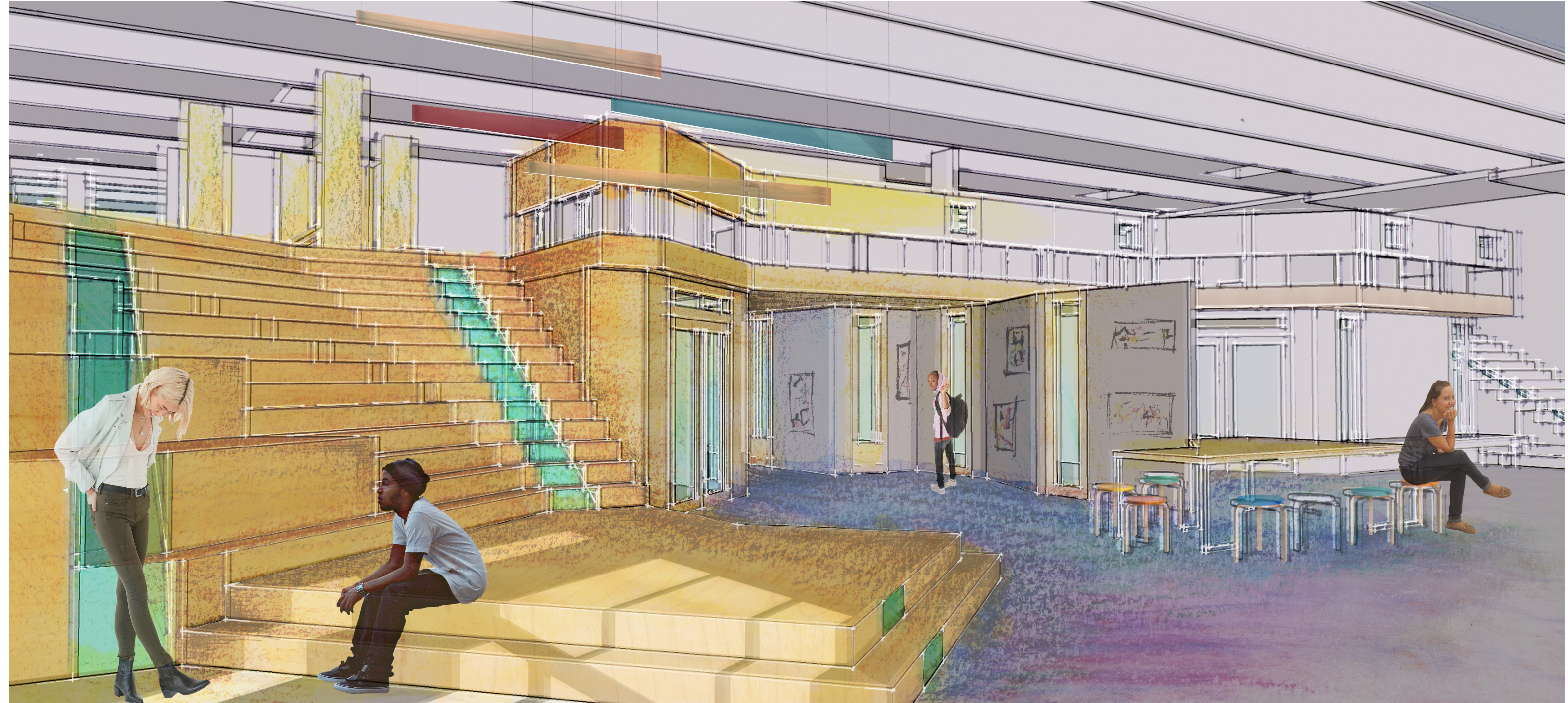
Gallery + Community Stair₂

The open gallery creates a series of moments throughout the circulation space. Showcasing student work in multiple areas of the space aims to foster community and confidence in the students. A multi—use staircase provides opportunity for students to connect with their peers through conversation.

FF+E



Stool 60 | Alvar Aalto



Critique Area₄

The second level provides pin up and critique space for students, as well as a variety of areas to engage with each other on projects. The ribbon runs through this space creating opportunities for student engagement through rectilinear geometries.

FF+E



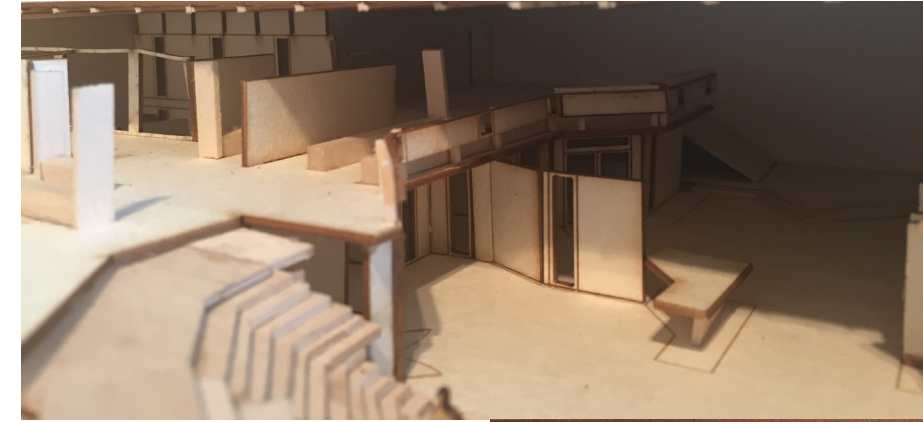
High Stool 64 | Alvar Aalto

MATERIALS



Plexwood
Okoume, oil/wax finish





show

P E R | S P E K T I V [Z]

A SPACE O DYSSEY

install



opening



Page 7:
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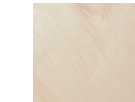
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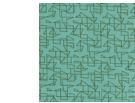
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appendix

2016 IDEC Abstract Submission Poster Presentation for which I was the recipient of the 2016 Award of Excellence for Best Poster Presentation. Presented at the 2016 Annual IDEC Conference in Portland Oregon, March 10, 2016.

Design Thinking

Providing Opportunity for Underserved Communities within the Design Discipline

Jessie Walton
MFA Candidate | Interior Design
Virginia Commonwealth University | Richmond, VA
Faculty Advisor: Rebecca Ventum
Committee Members: Emily Smith and Hillary Fugh

How can we as designers support efforts to increase diversity within our communities?

A study published by the Southern Education Foundation in January 2015 found 39 percent of Virginia public school students in 2013 came from low income families.¹ A policy brief from The Working Poor Families Project states that, of the 24 million children from low income families across the country, over half are of racial or ethnic minorities.² Additionally, research compiled by the Americans for the Arts found that these underserved communities are provided less access to arts education.³

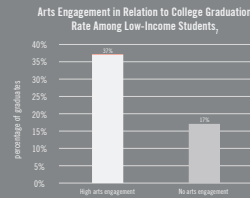
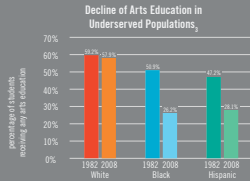
Arts education has been shown to help at-risk communities development more engaged students.⁴ Through in-school or community-based programs, urban youth in low income communities are taught to be more aware of their social, political and community impact when they engage with the arts.⁵ Arts programs serve as important stepping stones for exploring careers in design.

However, many low income students lack access to arts based programs.

Between 1982 and 2008 the number of Black students with access to arts education programs dropped by 24.7%, and access for Hispanic students fell 19.1%. While White students only saw a 1.3% decline.⁶

Much like arts education, design thinking teaches key skills that transfer to a variety of situations beyond the discipline. Students learn to problem solve and to think critically through a human-centered approach. Design thinking allows students to hone their interpersonal skills by listening to the needs of users to develop empathy and a deeper understanding of the design problem at hand.⁷ Many fields beyond design value interpersonal relationships, and the focus on building these skills sets students on a path for success regardless of career choice.

A human-centered design philosophy pushes design students to take action. Problem-solving through multiple iterations of an idea teaches students that a failed attempt is not a failure, but a chance to expand upon an initial idea, gaining a specific understanding for the possible solutions to a design problem. Ultimately, a student connected to this process will view problem-solving by means of risk-taking as an enlightening journey toward socially and economically impactful design.⁸



Project H: Case Study

Project H is a hands-on, skill building program modeled after a design-build style of design discovery. Offering a year long studio class and a summer camp for girls, the program exposes middle and high school students to the process and challenges of real world design projects. Through Studio H and Camp H, students explore the design process via projects they've imagined and follow through to creation.⁹

Project H addresses the ways girls and students of color can use their core subjects to generate an interest in the exploration of spaces and how things are made, while emphasizing the local community for which the students are designing. Project H pushes students to think creatively and encourages self-expression through these community based projects.

Program founder, Emily Piloton breaks down the curriculum into six design directives:

- Design through action
- Design with, not for
- Design systems, not stuff
- Document, share, measure
- Start locally + scale globally
- Build



Rebecca Smith, Rachel, designed the 2015-2016 Studio H class of high school girls. Located in the 2200 University of North County, VA, is the new largest student residence at the U.S. largest and best high school campus. The studio was featured in Architecture Now and was named a new American and 10 new jobs were in opening in October 2017.



Project H approaches the integration of education and design as a means of fostering community by addressing the overlap in three main ways.

Design for Education. Addressing the spaces, materials and experience within an occupied area.

Redesigning Education. Looking at how education is administered, what is offered and to whom. In other words, providing opportunity for change and the motivation for those involved to want change.

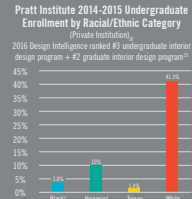
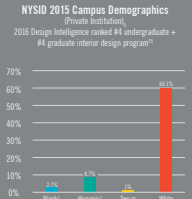
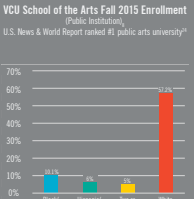
Design as Education. Teaching and learning, "design thinking, coupled with real construction and fabrication skills put towards a local community purpose". As well as, melding the critical studio environment with a shop based class to apply core class skills.¹⁰

The curriculum celebrates independent critical thinking, experimentation and helps to foster confidence through a sense of accomplishment and new understanding. Students develop skills which are vital in the working world and learn the value of hard-work, hands-on learning and craftsmanship.¹¹

Student data

While they enroll in high numbers across other disciplines, students of color enroll in art and design school in lower numbers than their white peers. Design, therefore should address multiple experiences, yet it draws primarily from the dominant culture.

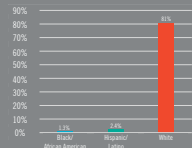
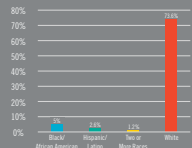
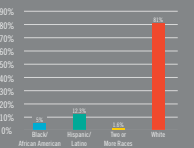
Design Intelligence program rankings were key in choosing which institutions to compare. NYSD, Pratt Institute and RISD comprise 3 of the top 10 undergraduate interior design programs in the U.S.¹²



Faculty data

Studies show that all students benefit from a more diverse faculty. Minority students excel when they can relate to their instructors experience. Additionally, white students benefit by being exposed to new and alternative viewpoints.¹³

"Many times when students feel as though they have something in common with their teacher... it gives students a sense of belonging as well as comfort. They need a comfortable learning environment and...role models on campus to show them that positions of knowledge and social and political importance can be achieved by anyone."¹⁴

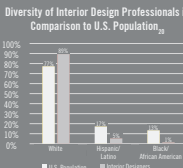


Representation within the Discipline

"African-Americans are approximately 13.5% of the nation's population...The number of black registered architects who are members of the American Institute of Architects currently is barely 1%." A 2007 Architect Magazine article states, "black women represent only 0.2% of a total population of approximately 91,000 licensed architects...None of the major architectural organizations tracks the number of black architects, or black women architects, gaining licensure"¹⁵

Searches on ASID and IIDA websites related to the topic of diversity yield slim results. Less than five references to the lack of diversity within the profession were touched upon in searching both associations. Search terms included: "race", "racial", "diversity", "race/diversity", "racial diversity", "Hispanic", "African-American", "inclusive", "designers of color", "equality", "minority", and "minorities". This speaks to the discipline's lack of attention placed on the importance of diversity within design.

The primary source touching on the subject of design within the discipline was found in a letter written by ASID to the U.S. Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Oversight, Agency Action, Federal Rights and Federal Courts refuting the claim that interior design licensure is aimed at blocking the entries of minorities into the profession. ASID's defense notes the inaccuracy of these claims and



Community Leaders

Over 600 students ages 9-17 have participated in a Project H initiative. Of girls attending Camp H, 91% feel more confident, creative and excited about school following the experience.¹⁶ Students who develop design thinking skills become more engaged in the education and creative processes. They have more positive conflict management and communication skills, which influence their interactions in other situation outside these programs.

Initiatives that promote diversity within design are popping up across the U.S. and engaging students in the interactive design process through community based projects. Design Diversity, a collaborative out of Cleveland, OH has developed a program called, Making Our Own Space (MOOS), as a means of engaging teens with hands-on projects that directly affect their communities.¹⁷ MOOS is also supported by Alex Gilliam, a designer based in Philadelphia, PA who has founded multiple initiatives in his city—public workshop and Tiny WPA—that promote the creation of objects and spaces made by and for residents in the area.¹⁸ Many of these recently founded programs reflect positively on the design community.

However, more steps need to be taken to increase minority representation within higher education and the professional community. Design associations, such as ASID and IIDA, need to be advocates for inclusive learning and working environments. Additionally, we as designers need to speak up about these issues. Design is human-centered and everyone engages with the built environment, as stewards of these environments we should be advocating for the representation of all humans.

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² The Working Poor Families Project, "The Working Poor Families Project: A Policy Brief", January 2015, www.workingpoorfamiliesproject.org.
³ Americans for the Arts, "The Arts and Economic Development", 2015, www.arts.gov.
⁴ Americans for the Arts, "The Arts and Economic Development", 2015, www.arts.gov.
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⁸ IDEC, "Design Thinking: A Human-Centered Approach", 2015, www.idec.org.
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¹⁰ Project H, "Project H: A Design-Build Program", 2015, www.projecth.org.
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¹⁵ Architect Magazine, "Black Women in Architecture", 2007, www.architectmagazine.com.
¹⁶ Project H, "Project H: A Design-Build Program", 2015, www.projecth.org.
¹⁷ Design Diversity, "Making Our Own Space", 2015, www.designdiversity.org.
¹⁸ Alex Gilliam, "Tiny WPA", 2015, www.tinywpa.com.

Design Thinking

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Arts education has been shown to help at-risk communities development more engaged students.⁴ Through in-school or community-based programs, urban youth in low income communities are taught to be more aware of their social, political and community impact when they engage with the arts.⁵ Arts programs serve as important stepping stones for exploring careers in design.

However, many low income students lack access to arts based programs.

Between 1982 and 2008 the number of Black students with access to arts education programs dropped by 24.7%, and access for Hispanic students fell 19.1%. While White students only saw a 1.3% decline.

Much like arts education, design thinking teaches key skills that transfer to a variety of situations beyond the discipline. Students learn to problem solve and to think critically through a human-centered approach. Design thinking allows students to hone their interpersonal skills by listening to the needs of users to develop empathy and a deeper understanding of the design problem at hand.⁶ Many fields beyond design value interpersonal relationships, and the focus on building these skills sets students on a path for success regardless of career choice.

A human-centered design philosophy pushes design students to take action. Problem-solving through multiple iterations of an idea teaches students that a failed attempt is not a failure, but a chance to expand upon an initial idea, gaining a specific understanding for the possible solutions to a design problem. Ultimately, a student connected to this process will view problem-solving by means of risk-taking as an enlightening journey toward socially and economically impactful design.⁶

Student data

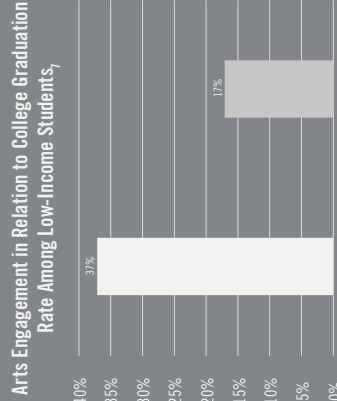
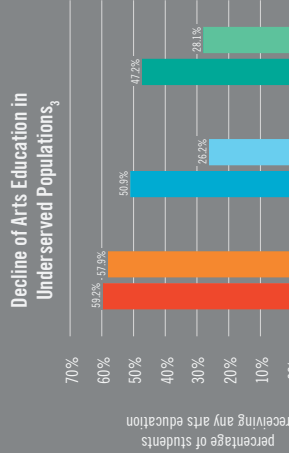
While they enroll in high numbers across other disciplines, students of color enroll in art and design school in lower numbers than their white peers. Design, therefore should address multiple experiences, yet it draws primarily from the dominant culture.

Design Intelligence program rankings were key in choosing which institutions to compare. NYSID, Pratt Institute and RISD comprise 3 of the top 10 undergraduate interior design programs in the U.S.²³

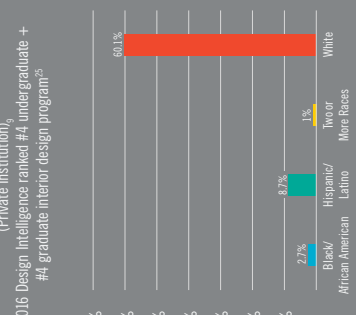
Faculty data

Studies show that all students benefit from a more diverse faculty. Minority students excel when they can relate to their instructors experience. Additionally, white students benefit by being exposed to new and alternative viewpoints.^{24, 25}

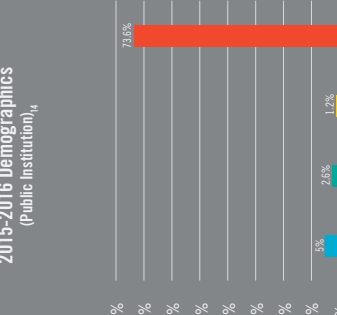
“Many times when students feel as though they have something in common with their teacher... It gives students a sense of belonging as well as comfort. They need a comfortable learning environment and...role models on campus to show them that positions of knowledge and social and political importance can be achieved by anyone.”²⁶



NYSID 2015 Campus Demographics

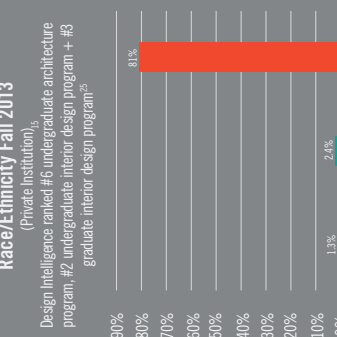


VCU Full-time Instructional Faculty 2015-2016 Demographics



Jessie Walton
NFA Candidate | Interior Design
Virginia Commonwealth University | Richmond, VA
Faculty Advisor: Roberto Ventura
Committee Members: Emily Smith and Hilary Fayle

RISD Faculty Headcount by Race/Ethnicity Fall 2013



Project H: Case Study

Project H is a hands-on, skill building program modeled after a design-build style of design discovery. Offering a year-long studio class and a summer camp for girls, the program exposes middle and high school students to the process and challenges of real world design projects. Through Studio H and Camp H, students explore the design process via projects they've imagined and follow through to creation.²⁸

Project H addresses the ways girls and students of color can use their core subjects to generate an interest in the exploration of spaces and how things are made, while emphasizing the local community for which the students are designing. Project H pushes students to think creatively and encourages self-expression through these community based projects.

Program founder, Emily Pilotton breaks down the curriculum into six design directives:

- Design through action
- Design with, not for
- Design systems, not stuff
- Document, share, measure
- Start locally + scale globally
- Build



Wireless Super Market. Designed by the initial Studio H class of high school juniors. Created for the 2,000 residents of Brent County, NC. It is the only former's market structure in the U.S. designed and built by high school students. The building was completed in 2011 and has since created 2 new businesses and 15 new jobs since its opening in October 2011.²⁹



Representation within the Discipline

“African-Americans are approximately 13.5% of the nation’s population...The number of black registered architects who are members of the American Institute of Architects currently is barely 1%.”³⁰ A 2007 Architect Magazine article states, “black women represent only 0.2% of a total population of approximately 91,000 licensed architects...None of the major architectural organizations tracks the number of black architects, or black women architects, gaining licensure.”³⁰

Searches on ASD and IDA websites related to the topic of diversity yield slim results. Less than five references to the lack of diversity within the profession were touched upon in searching both associations. Search terms included: “race”, “racial”, “diversity”, “race/ diversity”, “racial diversity”, “Hispanic”, “African-American”, “inclusive”, “designers of color”, “equality”, “minority”, and “minorities.” This speaks to the discipline’s lack of attention placed on the importance of diversity within design.

The primary source touching on the subject of design within the discipline was found in a letter written by ASD to the U.S. Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Oversight, Agency Action, Federal Rights and Federal Courts refuting the claim that interior design licensure is aimed at blocking the entree of minorities into the profession. ASD’s defense notes the inaccuracy of these claims and

Community Leaders

Over 600 students ages 9-17 have participated in a Project H initiative. Of girls attending Camp H, 91% feel more confident, creative and excited about school following the experience.³¹ Students who develop design thinking skills become more engaged in the education and creative processes. They have more positive conflict management and communication skills, which influence their interactions in other situation outside these programs.

Initiatives that promote diversity within design are popping up across the U.S. and engaging students in the iterative design process through community based projects. Design Diversity, a collaborative out of Cleveland, OH has developed a program called, Making Our Own Space (MOOS) as a means of engaging teens with hands-on projects that directly affect their communities.³² MOOS is also supported by Alex Gilliam, a designer based in Philadelphia, PA who has founded multiple initiatives in his city—public workshop and Tiny WPA—that promote the creation of objects and spaces made by and for residents in the area.^{32a} Many of these recently founded programs reflect positively on the design community.

However, more steps need to be taken to increase minority representation within higher education and the professional community. Design associations, such as ASD and IDA, need to be advocates for inclusive learning and working environments. Additionally, we as designers need to speak up about these issues. Design is human-centered and everyone engages with the built environment, as stewards of these environments we should be advocating for the representation of all humans.

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